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Bridges

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(54) **DIAGNOSING MULTIPATH INTERFERENCE AND ELIMINATING MULTIPATH INTERFERENCE IN 3D SCANNERS BY DIRECTED PROBING**

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None
See application file for complete search history.

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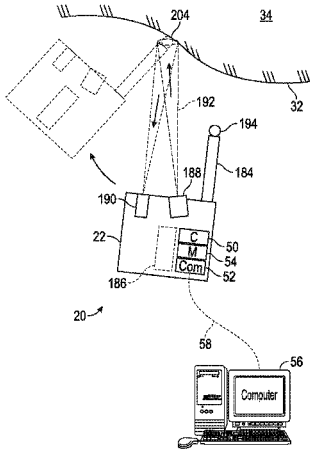
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method for determining 3D coordinates of points on a surface of the object by providing a remote probe having a probe tip and a non-contact 3D measuring device having a projector and camera coupled to a processor, projecting a pattern onto the surface to determine a first set of 3D coordinates of points on the surface, determining susceptibility of the object to multipath interference by projecting and reflecting rays from the measured 3D coordinates of the points, projecting a first light to direct positioning of the remote probe by the user, the first light determined at least in part by the susceptibility to multipath interference, touching the probe tip to the surface at the indicated region, illuminating at least three spots of light on the remote probe, capturing an image of the at least three spots with the camera, and determining 3D coordinates of the probe tip.

8 Claims, 14 Drawing Sheets



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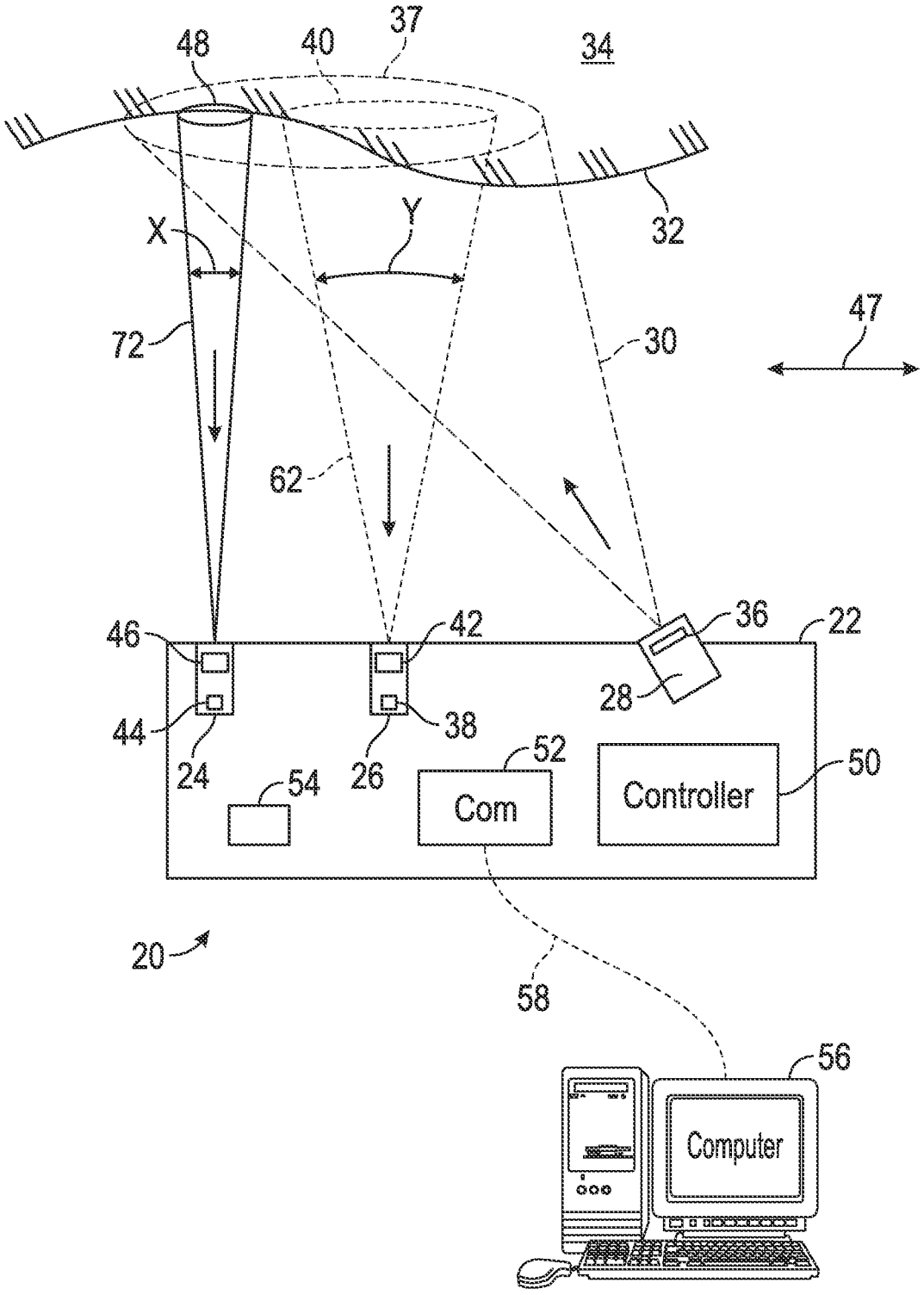
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46
42
36
22
28
44
38
24
26
52
54
Com
Controller
50
20
58
56
Computer

FIG. 1

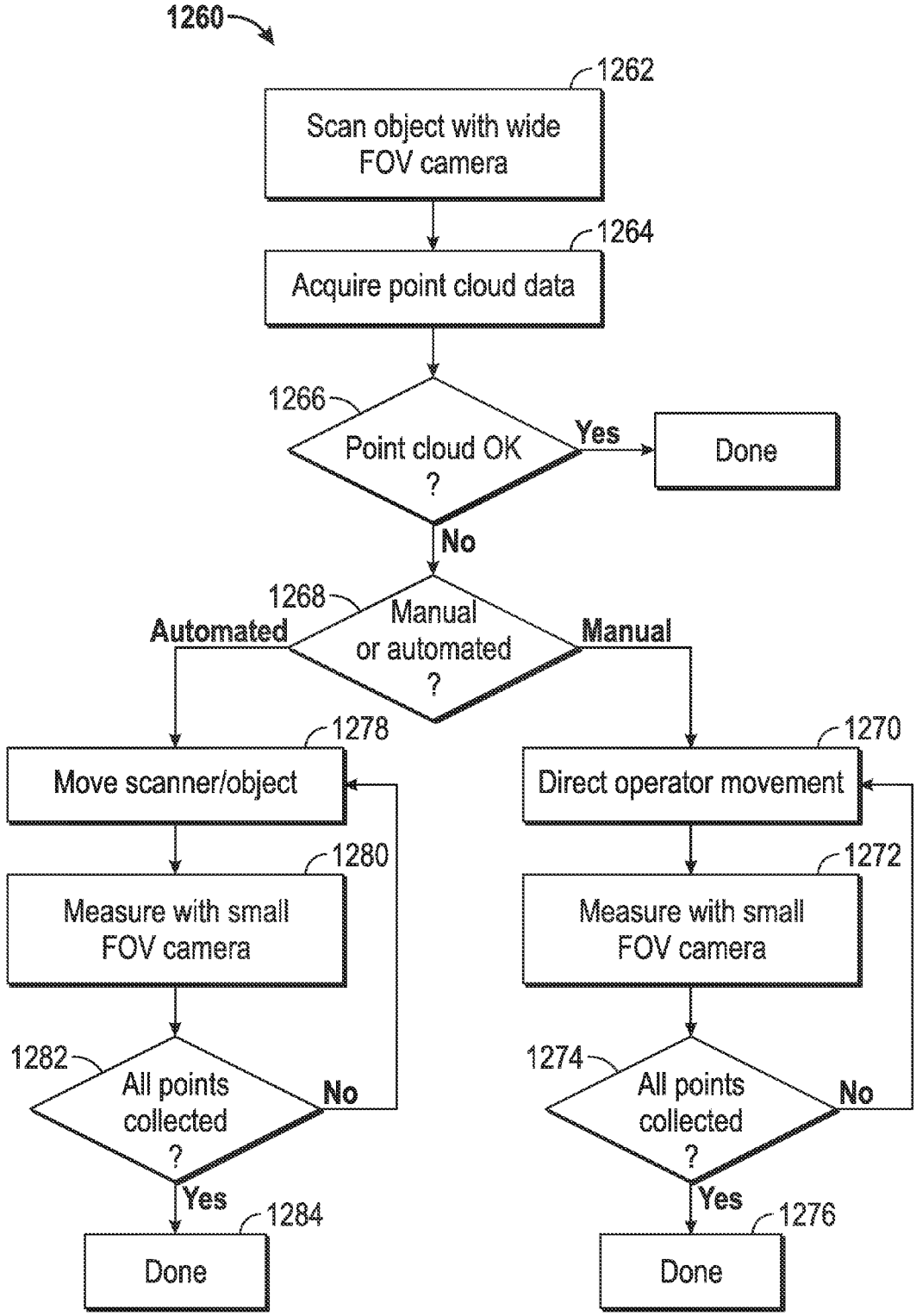
1260
1262
Scan object with wide FOV camera
1264
Acquire point cloud data
1266
Point cloud OK ?
Yes
Done
No
1268
Manual or automated ?
Automated
Manual
1278
Move scanner/object
1280
Measure with small FOV camera
1282
All points collected ?
No
Yes
1284
Done
1270
Direct operator movement
1272
Measure with small FOV camera
1274
All points collected ?
No
Yes
1276
Done

FIG. 2

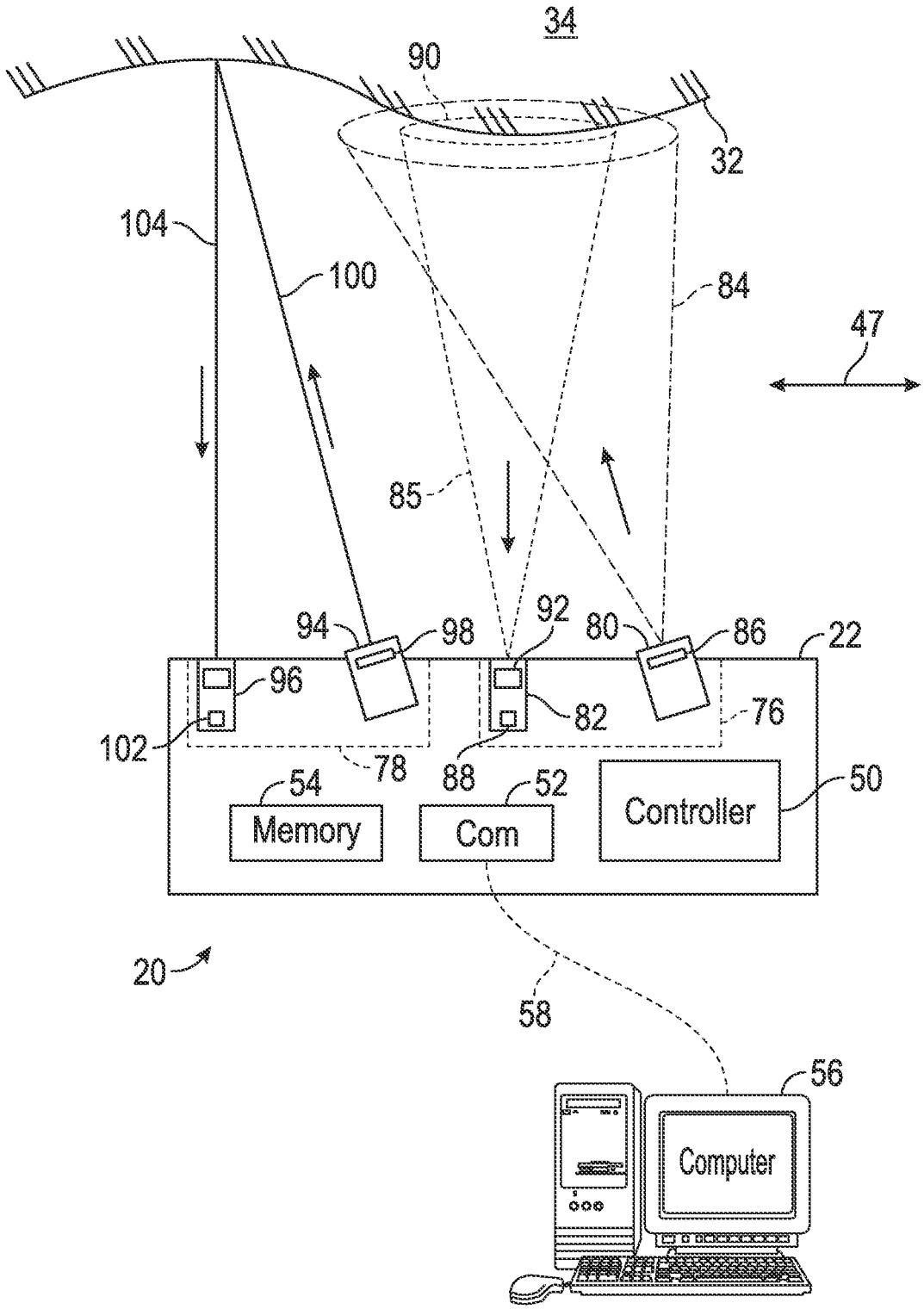
34
90
32
104
100
84
47
85
94
98
92
80
86
22
96
82
76
102
78
88
54
52
50
Memory
Com
Controller
20
58
56
Computer

FIG. 3

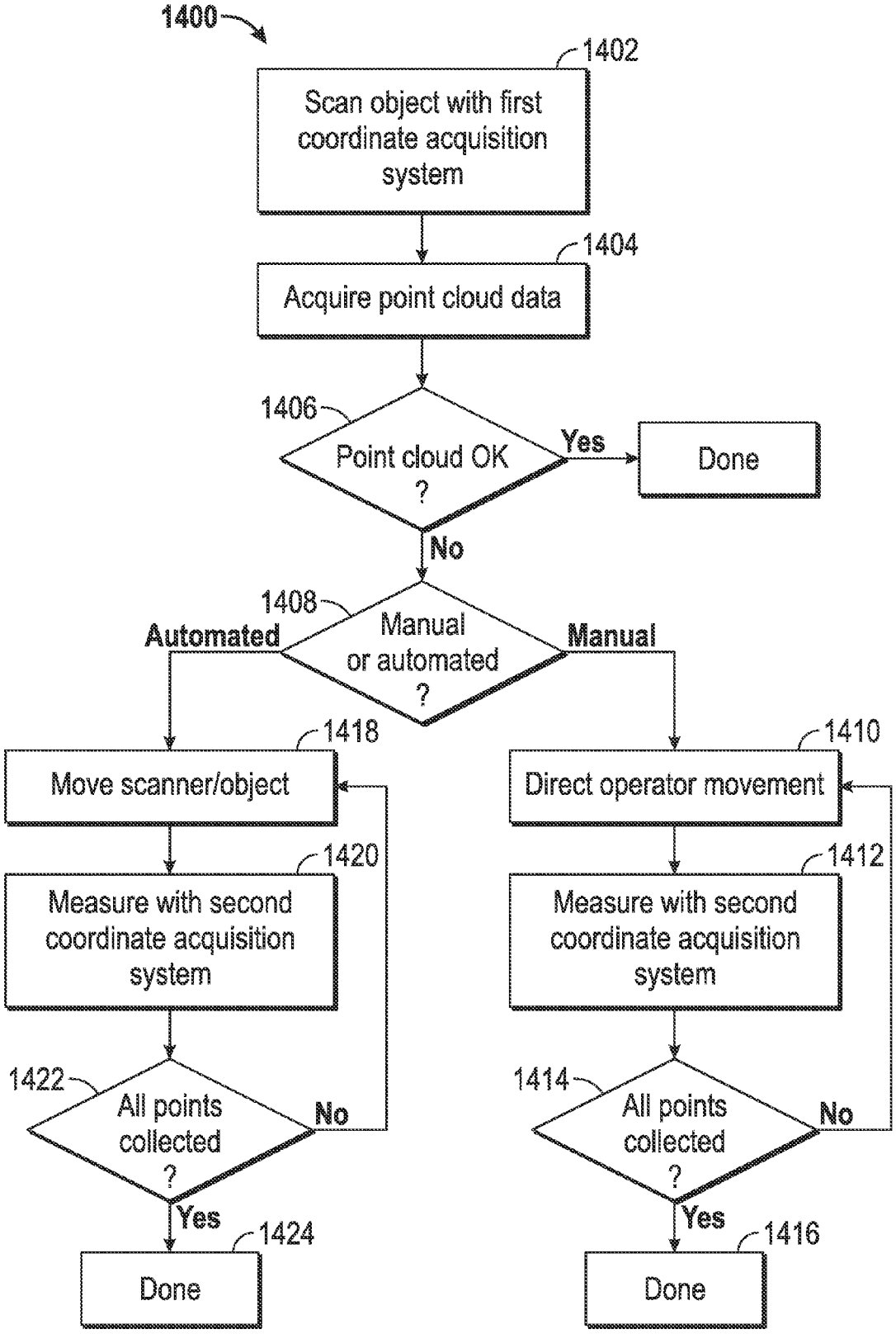
1400
1402
Scan object with first coordinate acquisition system
1404
Acquire point cloud data
1406
Point cloud OK ?
Yes
Done
No
1408
Manual or automated ?
Automated
Manual
1418
Move scanner/object
1420
Measure with second coordinate acquisition system
1422
All points collected ?
No
Yes
1424
Done
1410
Direct operator movement
1412
Measure with second coordinate acquisition system
1414
All points collected ?
No
Yes
1416
Done

FIG. 4

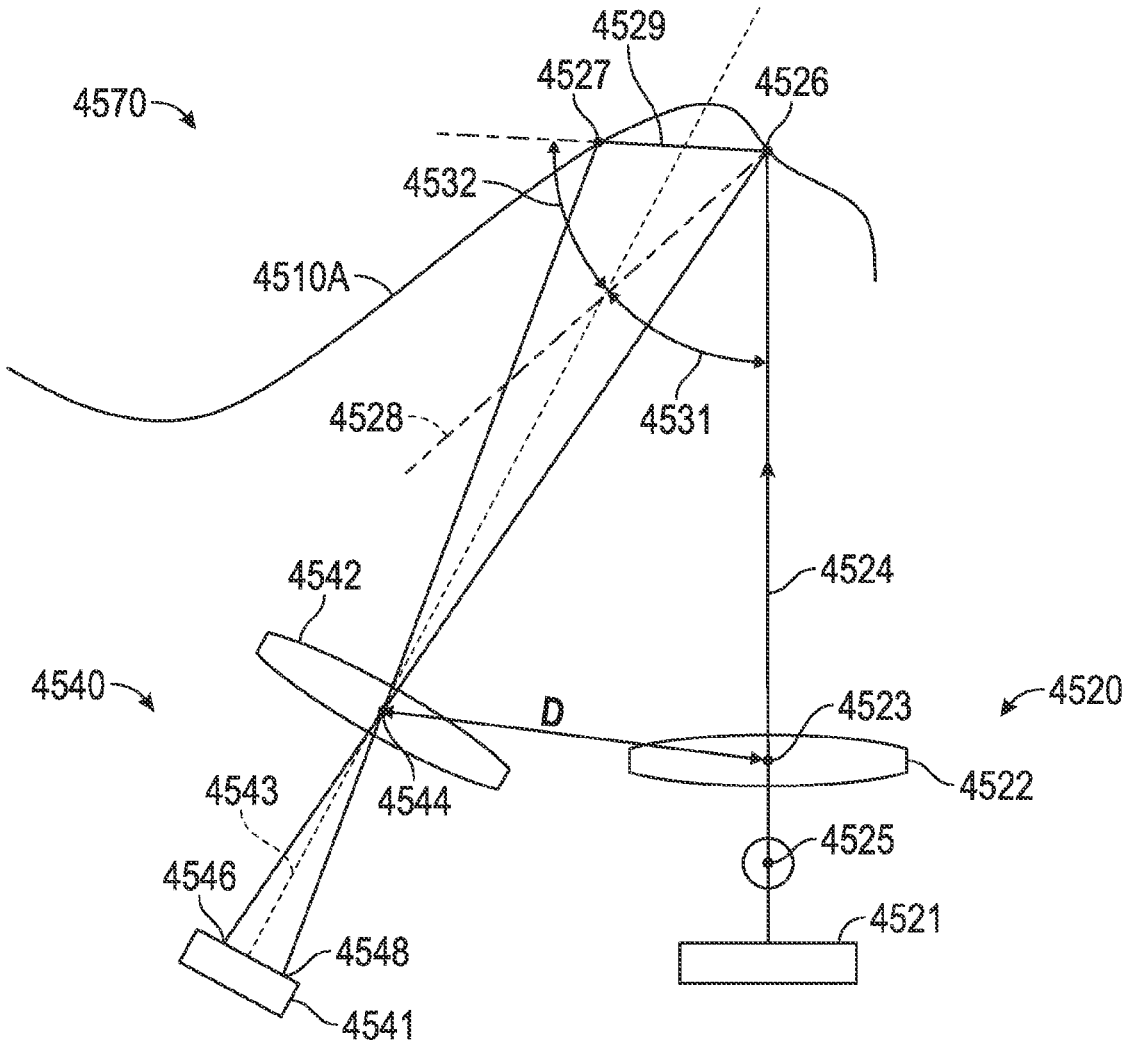
4529
4527
4526
4570
4532
4510A
4528
4531
4542
4524
4540
D
4523
4520
4543
4544
4522
4525
4546
4521
4548
4541

FIG. 5A

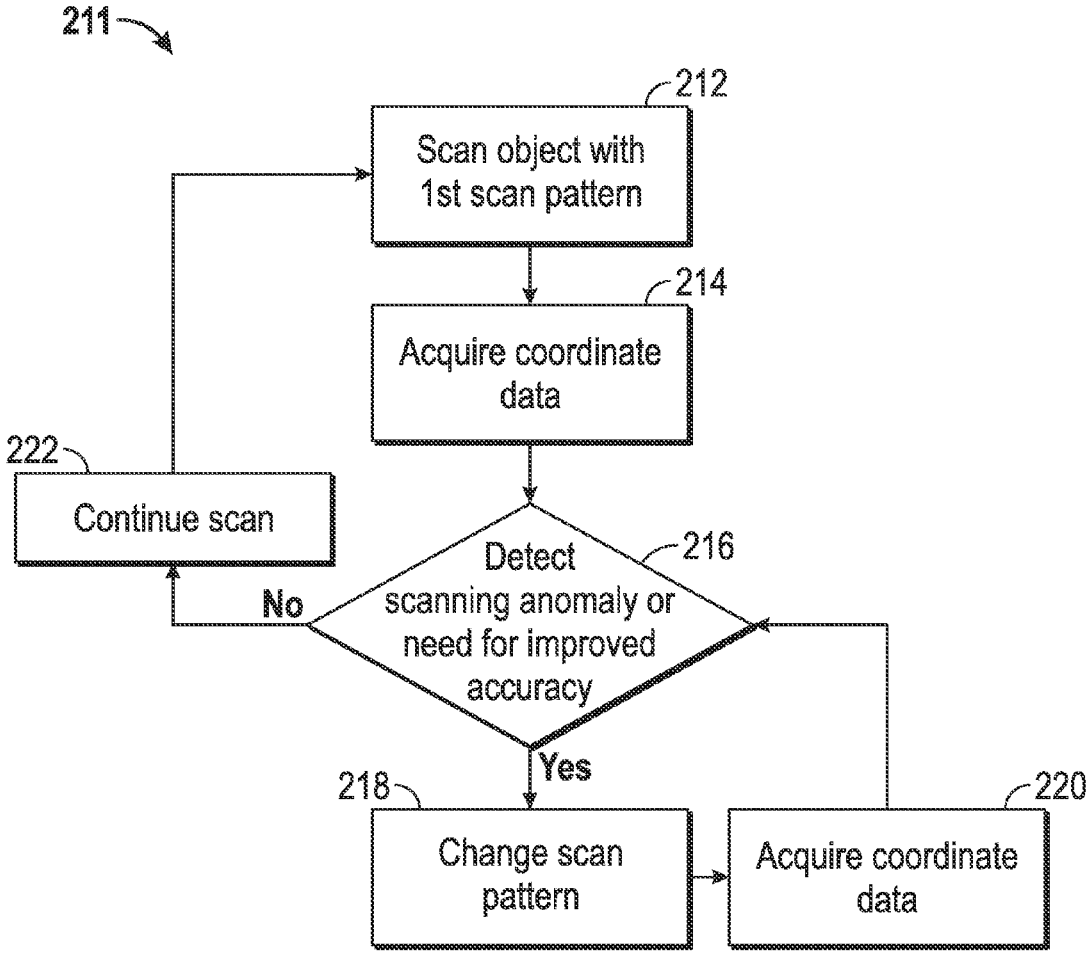
211
212
Scan object with 1st scan pattern
214
Acquire coordinate data
222
Continue scan
Detect scanning anomaly or need for improved accuracy
216
No
Yes
218
Change scan pattern
220
Acquire coordinate data

FIG. 5B

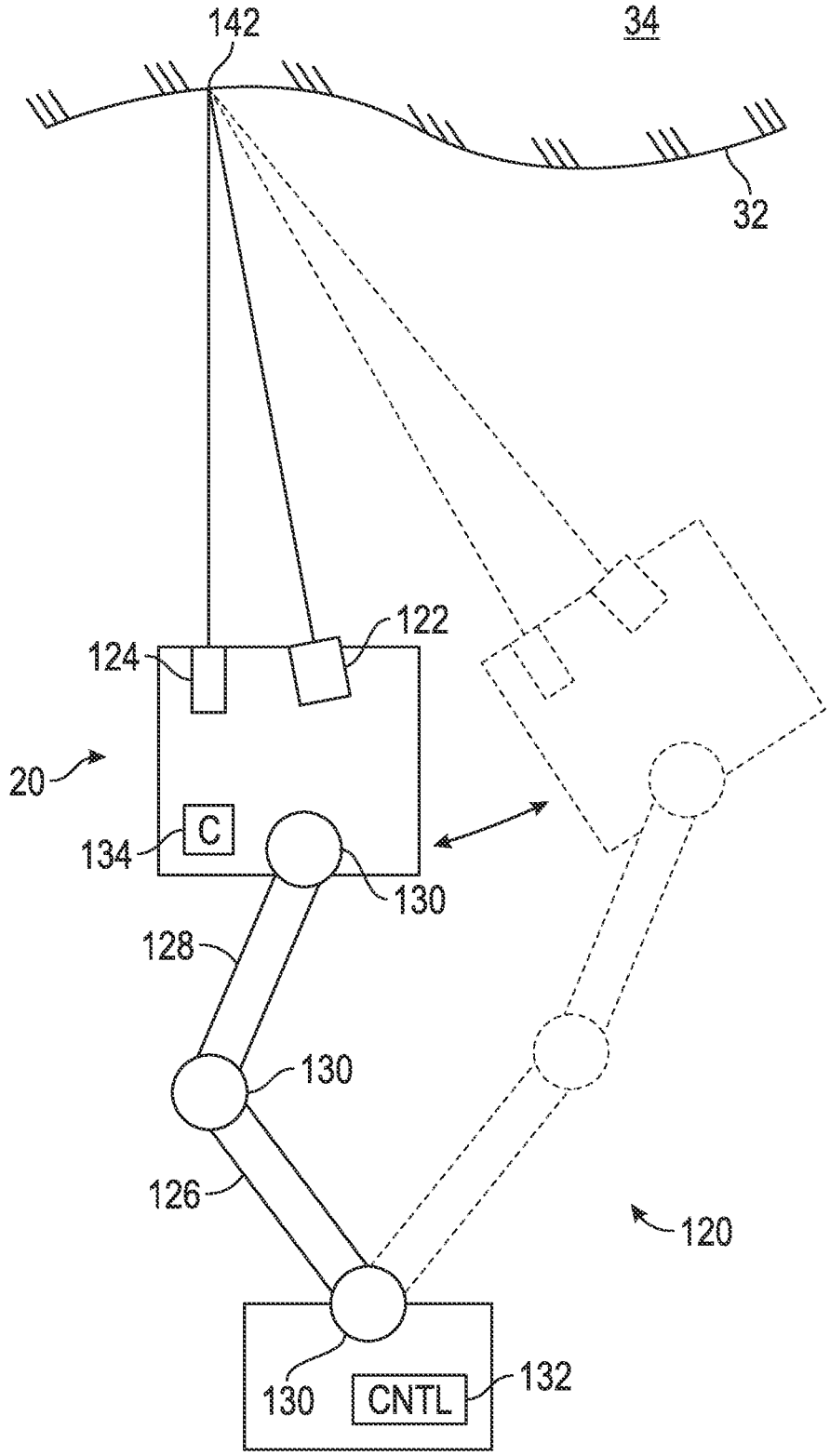

FIG. 6

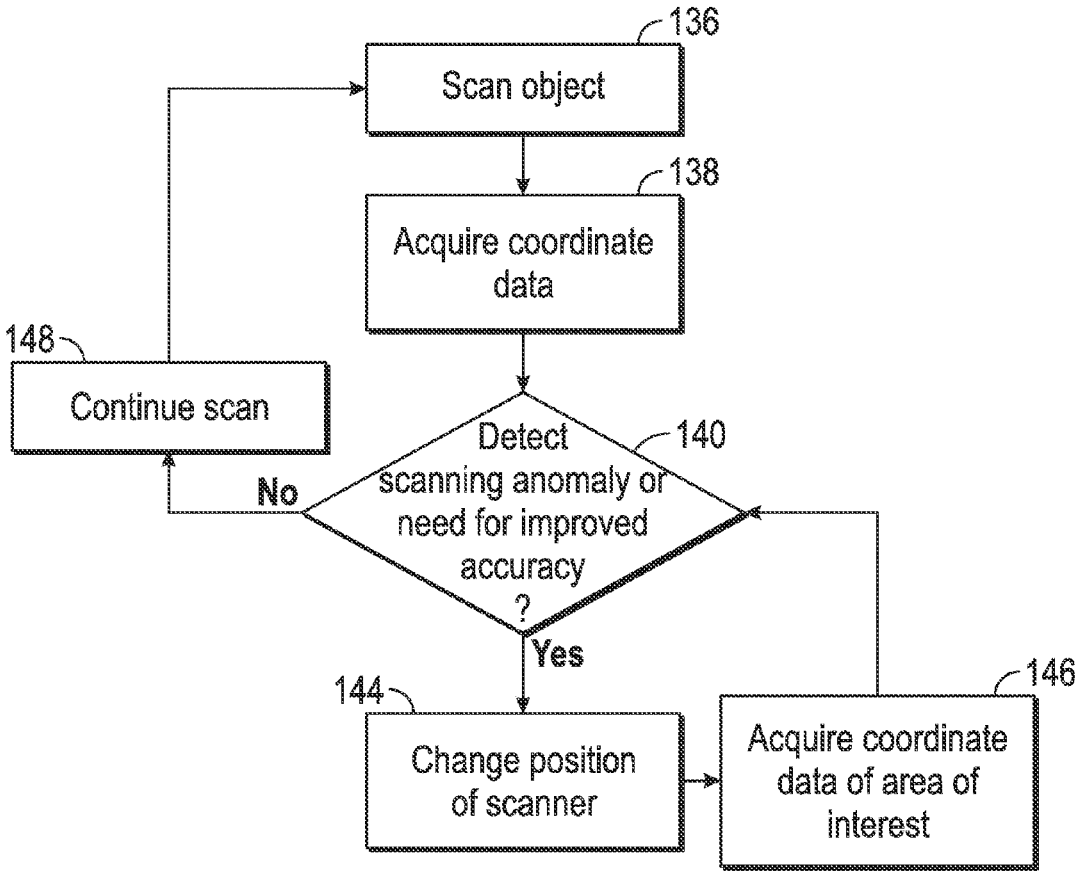
136
Scan object
138
Acquire coordinate data
148
Continue scan
Detect scanning anomaly or need for improved accuracy ?
140
No
Yes
144
Change position of scanner
146
Acquire coordinate data of area of interest

FIG. 7

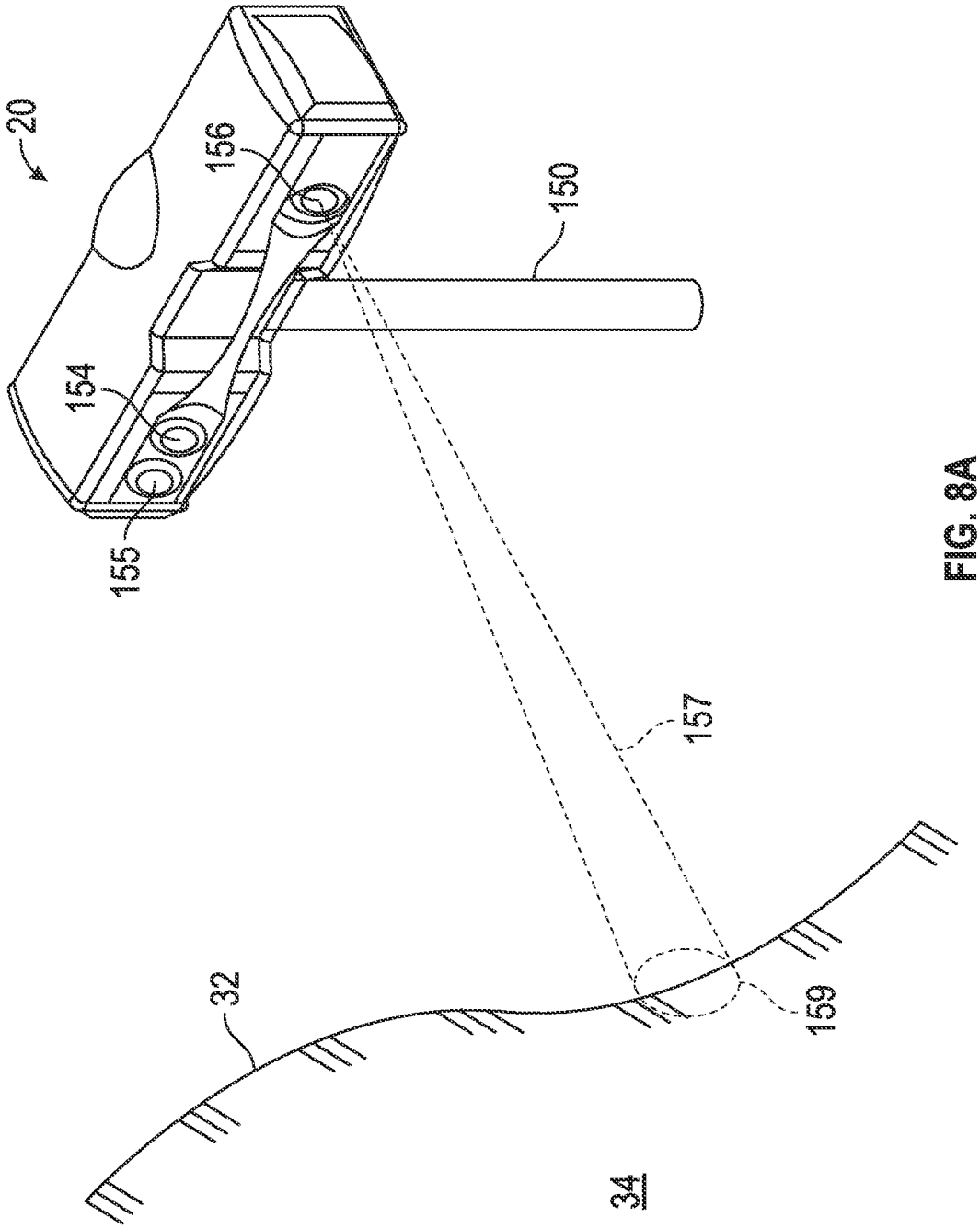

FIG. 8A

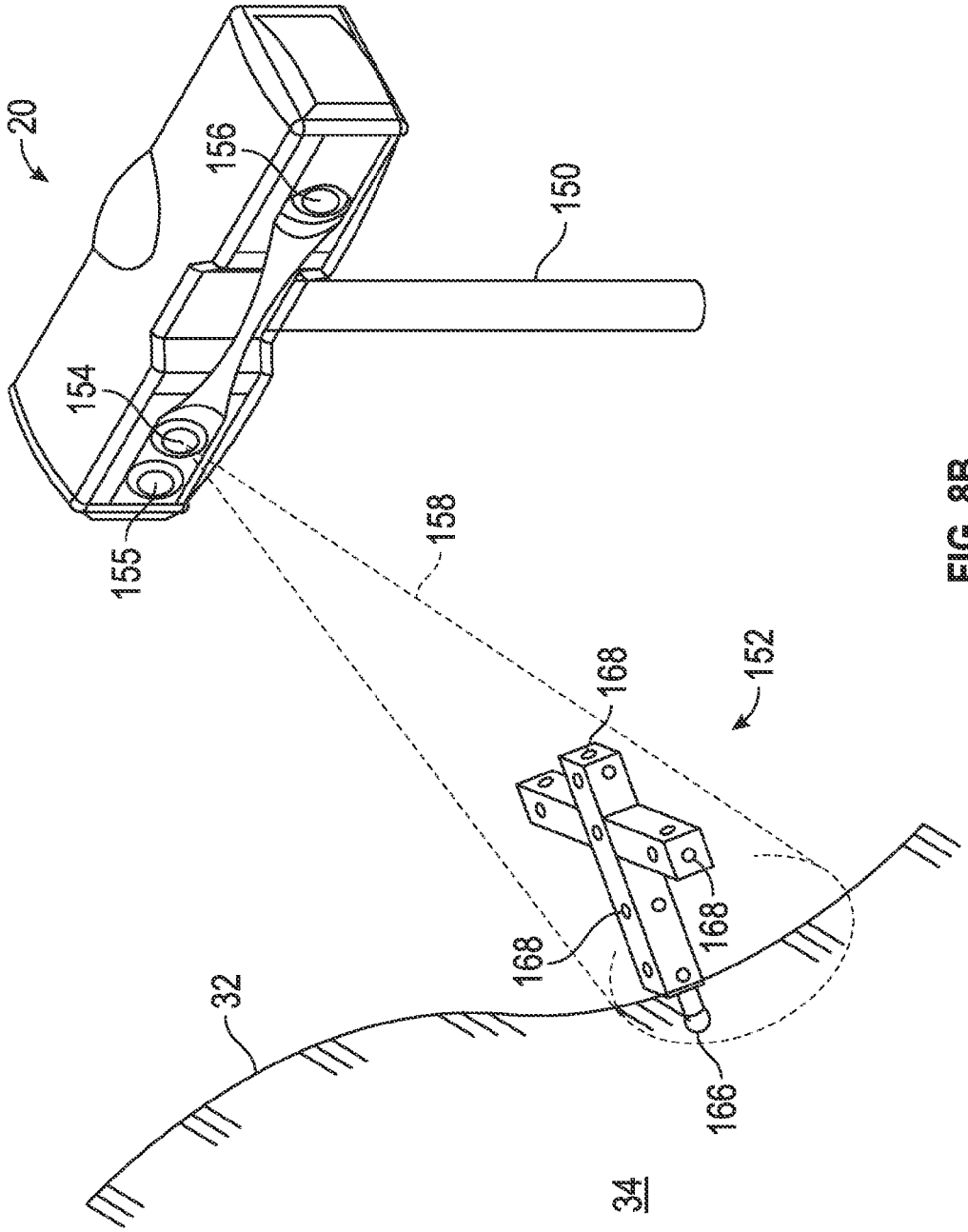

FIG. 8B

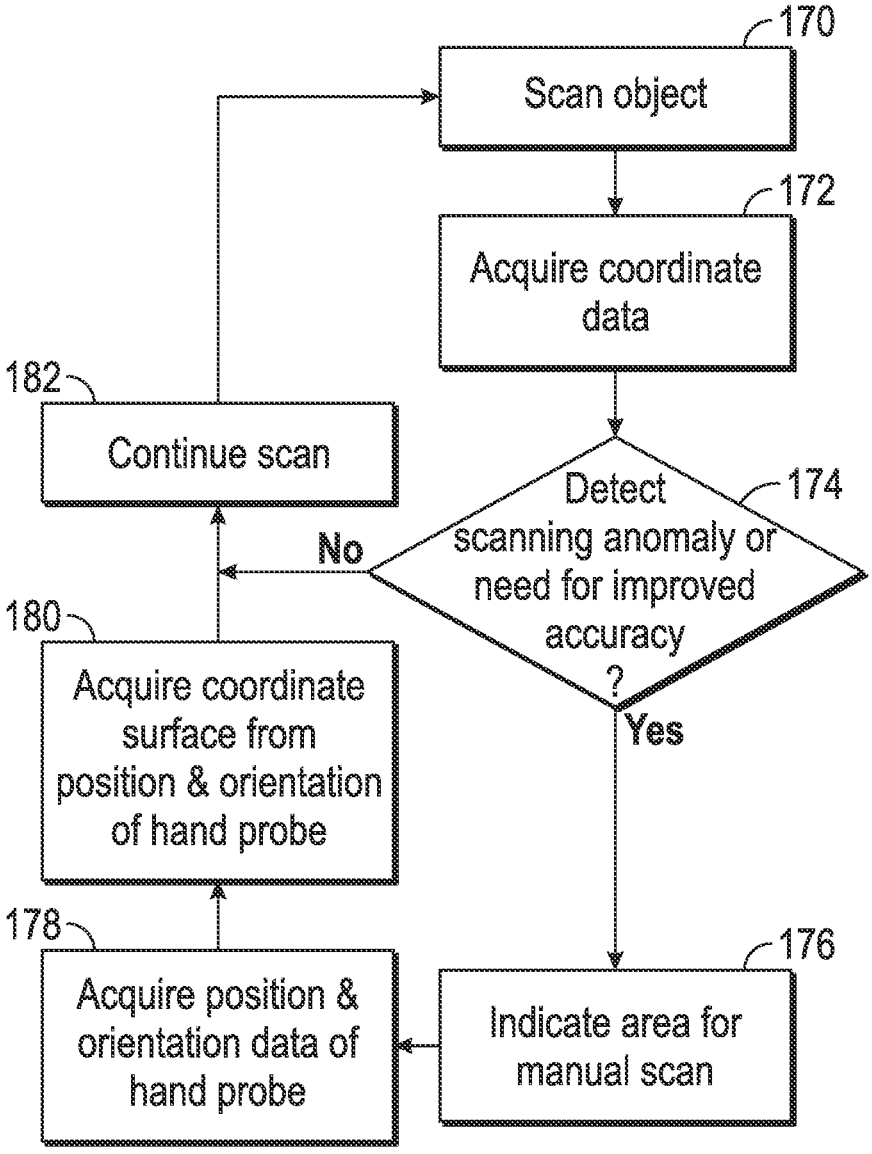
170
Scan object
172
Acquire coordinate data
174
Detect scanning anomaly or need for improved accuracy ?
No
Yes
182
Continue scan
180
Acquire coordinate surface from position & orientation of hand probe
178
Acquire position & orientation data of hand probe
176
Indicate area for manual scan

FIG. 9

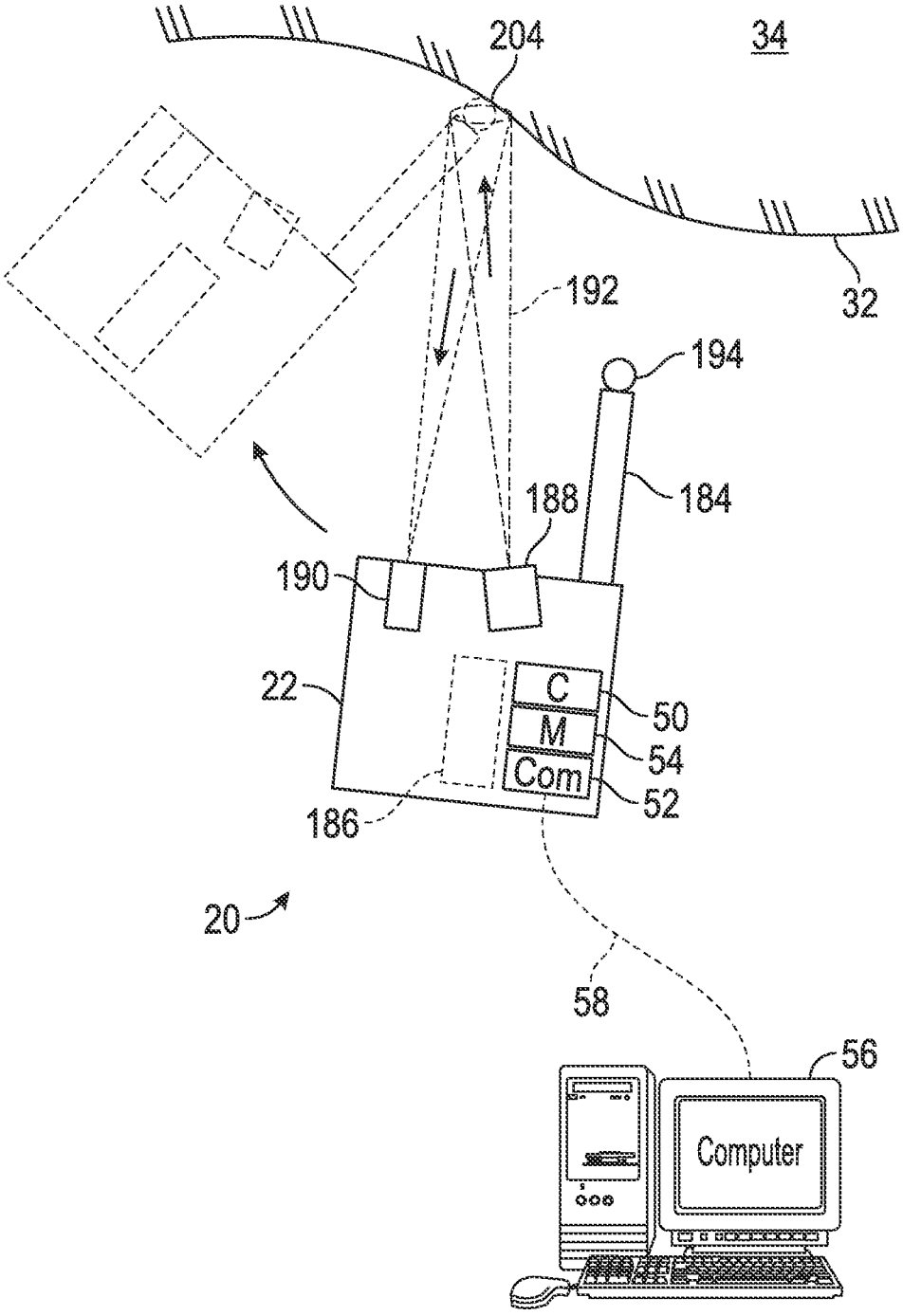
204
34
32
192
194
188
184
190
22
C
M
Com
50
54
52
186
20
58
56
Computer

FIG. 10

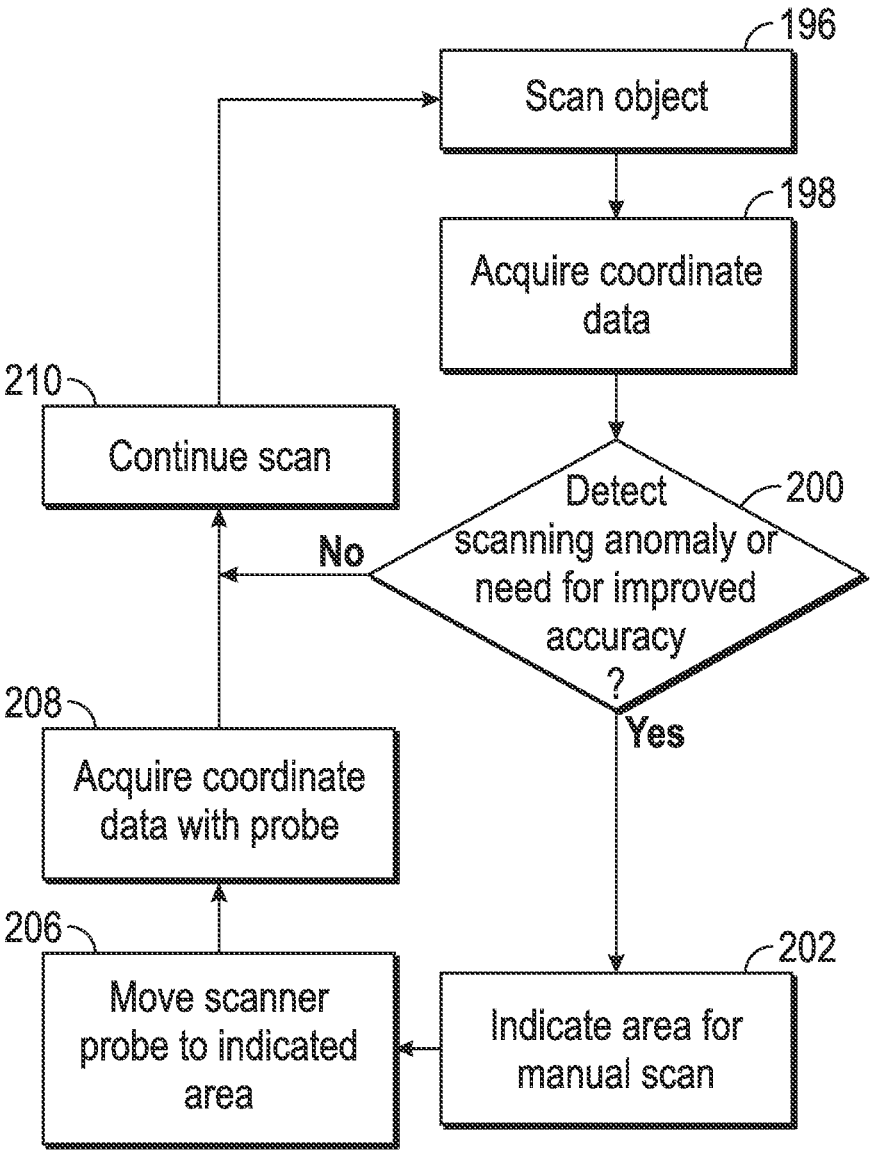
196
Scan object
198
Acquire coordinate data
210
Continue scan
Detect scanning anomaly or need for improved accuracy ?
200
No
Yes
208
Acquire coordinate data with probe
206
Move scanner probe to indicated area
202
Indicate area for manual scan

FIG. 11

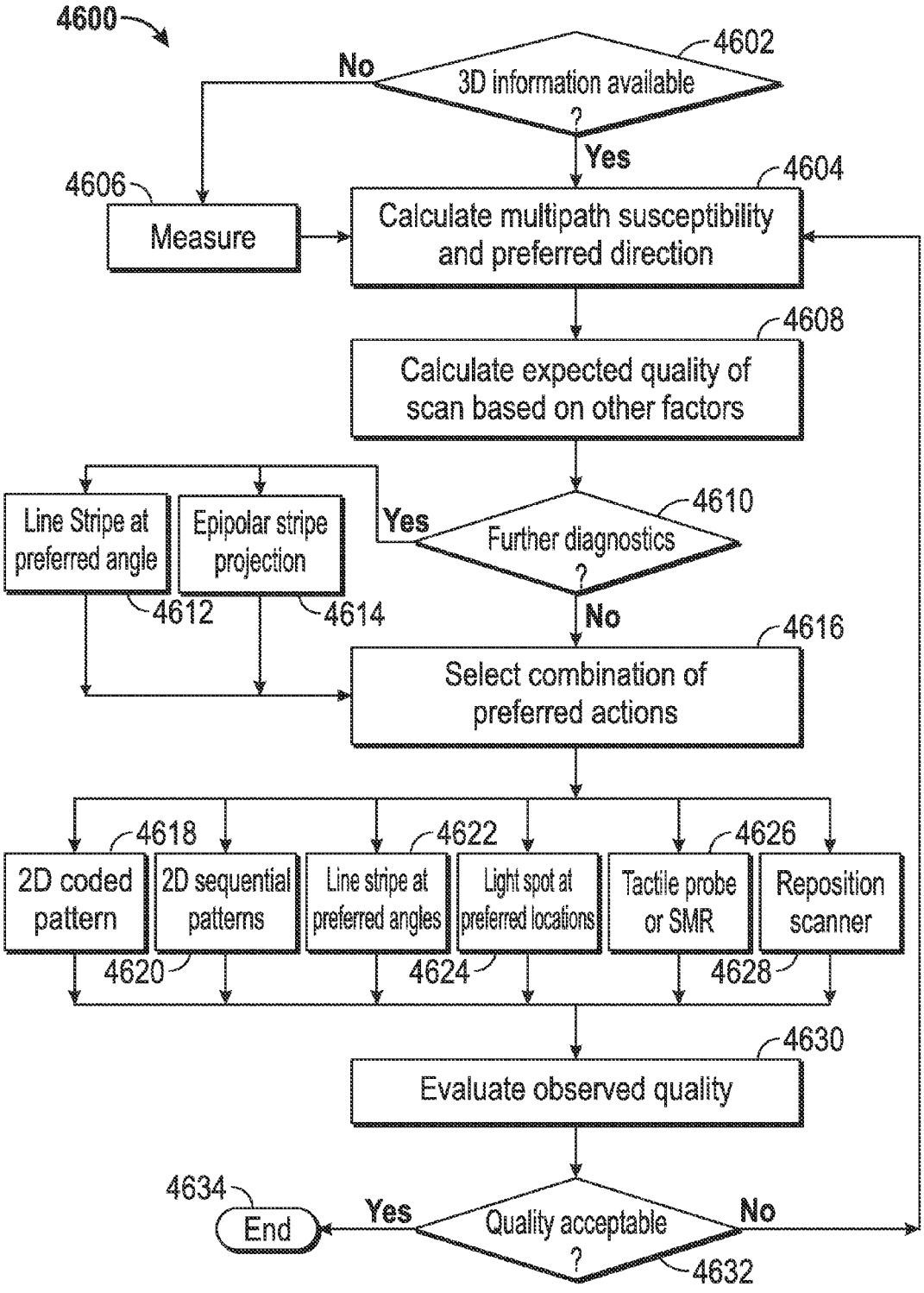
4600
4602
3D information available ?
No
Yes
4606
Measure
4604
Calculate multipath susceptibility and preferred direction
4608
Calculate expected quality of scan based on other factors
4610
Further diagnostics ?
Yes
No
Line Stripe at preferred angle
Epipolar stripe projection
4612
4614
4616
Select combination of preferred actions
4618
2D coded pattern
2D sequential patterns
4620
4622
Line stripe at preferred angles
Light spot at preferred locations
4624
4626
Tactile probe or SMR
Reposition scanner
4628
4630
Evaluate observed quality
4634
End
Quality acceptable ?
4632

FIG. 12

DIAGNOSING MULTIPATH INTERFERENCE AND ELIMINATING MULTIPATH INTERFERENCE IN 3D SCANNERS BY DIRECTED PROBING

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a non-provisional patent application which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/791,797 filed Mar. 15, 2013, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The subject matter disclosed herein relates to a three-dimensional coordinate scanner and in particular to a triangulation-type scanner having multiple modalities of data acquisition.

The acquisition of three-dimensional coordinates of an object or an environment is known. Various techniques may be used, such as time-of-flight or triangulation methods for example. A time-of-flight systems such as a laser tracker, total station, or time-of-flight scanner may direct a beam of light such as a laser beam toward a retroreflector target or a spot on the surface of the object. An absolute distance meter is used to determine the distance to the target or spot based on length of time it takes the light to travel to the target or spot and return. By moving the laser beam or the target over the surface of the object, the coordinates of the object may be ascertained. Time-of-flight systems have advantages in having relatively high accuracy, but in some cases may be slower than some other systems since time-of-flight systems must usually measure each point on the surface individually.

In contrast, a scanner that uses triangulation to measure three-dimensional coordinates projects onto a surface either a pattern of light in a line (e.g. a laser line from a laser line probe) or a pattern of light covering an area (e.g. structured light) onto the surface. A camera is coupled to the projector in a fixed relationship, by attaching a camera and the projector to a common frame for example. The light emitted from the projector is reflected off of the surface and detected by the camera. Since the camera and projector are arranged in a fixed relationship, the distance to the object may be determined using trigonometric principles. Compared to coordinate measurement devices that use tactile probes, triangulation systems provide advantages in quickly acquiring coordinate data over a large area. As used herein, the resulting collection of three-dimensional coordinate values provided by the triangulation system is referred to as a point cloud data or simply a point cloud.

A number of issues may interfere with the acquisition of high accuracy point cloud data when using a laser scanner. These include, but are not limited to: variations in the level of light received over the camera image plane as a result in variations in the reflectance of the object surface or variations in the angle of incidence of the surface relative to the projected light; low resolution near edge, such as edges of holes; and multipath interference for example. In some cases, the operator may be unaware of or unable to eliminate a problem. In these cases, missing or faulty point cloud data is the result.

Accordingly, while existing scanners are suitable for their intended purpose the need for improvement remains, particularly in providing a scanner that can adapt to undesirable conditions and provide improved data point acquisition.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

According to one aspect of the invention, a noncontact optical three-dimensional measuring device is provided. The noncontact optical three-dimensional measuring device comprising: a movable remote probe device having a sensor and at least three non-collinear points of light; an assembly that includes a projector, a first camera, and a second camera, wherein the projector, the first camera, and the second camera are fixed in relation to one another, there being a first distance between the projector and the first camera and a second distance between the projector and the second camera, the projector having a light source, the projector configured to emit onto a surface of an object a first light having a first pattern, the first camera having a first lens and a first photosensitive array, the first camera configured to receive a first portion of the first light reflected off the surface and to produce a first signal in response, the first camera having a first field of view, the first field of view being a first angular viewing region of the first camera, the second camera having a second lens and a second photosensitive array, the second camera configured to receive a second portion of a second light from the at least three non-collinear points of light and to produce a second signal in response, the second camera having a second field of view, the second field of view being a second angular viewing region of the second camera, the second field of view being different than the first field of view; and a processor, electrically coupled to the projector, the first camera, and the second camera, that executes a computer executable program code that when executed by the processor performs operations that include causing the first signal to be collected at a first time and the second signal to be collected at a second time different than the first time, determining three-dimensional coordinates of a first point on the surface based at least in part on the first signal and the first distance, and determining three-dimensional coordinates of a second point on the surface that is in contact with the sensor based at least in part on the second signal and the second distance.

According to one aspect of the invention, a method of determining three-dimensional coordinates on a surface of an object is provided. The method of determining three-dimensional coordinates on a surface of an object, the method comprising: providing a remote probe device having a sensor and at least three non-collinear points of light; providing an assembly that includes a projector, a first camera, and a second camera, wherein the projector, the first camera, and the second camera are fixed in relation to one another, there being a first distance between the projector and the first camera and a second distance between the projector and the second camera, the projector having a light source, the projector configured to emit onto the surface a first light having a first pattern, the first camera having a first lens and a first photosensitive array, the first camera configured to receive a first portion of the first light reflected off the surface, the first camera having a first field of view, the first field of view being a first angular viewing region of the first camera, the second camera having a second lens and a second photosensitive array, the second camera configured to receive a second portion of a second light from the at least three-noncollinear points of light, the second camera having a second field of view, the second field of view being a second angular viewing region of the second camera, the

second field of view being different than the first field of view; providing a processor electrically coupled to the projector, the first camera and the second camera; emitting from the projector onto the surface, in a first instance, the first light having the first pattern; acquiring in the first instance a first image of the surface with the first camera and sending a first signal to the processor in response; determining a first set of three-dimensional coordinates of first points on the surface, the first set based at least in part on the first pattern, the first signal and the first distance; carrying out a diagnostic procedure that determines a quality factor for the first set; determining a location on the surface based at least in part on results of the diagnostic procedure; emitting from the projector onto a position proximate the location, in a second instance, a third light; moving the remote probe to the location and contacting the sensor to the surface proximate the location; acquiring in a third instance a second image of the at least three non-collinear points of light with the second camera and sending a second signal to the processor in response; and determining a second set of three-dimensional coordinates of a second point where the sensor contacts the surface, the second set based at least in part on the second signal, and the second distance.

These and other advantages and features will become more apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The subject matter, which is regarded as the invention, is particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed in the claims at the conclusion of the specification. The foregoing and other features and advantages of the invention are apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. **1** is a top schematic view of a scanner in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **2** is a flow chart showing a method of operating the scanner of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a top schematic view of a scanner in accordance with another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **4** is a flow chart showing a method of operating the scanner of FIG. **3**;

FIG. **5**A is a schematic view of elements within a laser scanner according to an embodiment;

FIG. **5**B is a flow chart showing a method of operating a scanner according to an embodiment;

FIG. **6** is a top schematic view of a scanner in accordance with another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **7** is a flow chart showing a method of operating the scanner according to an embodiment;

FIGS. **8**A and **8**B are perspective views of a scanner used in conjunction with a remote probe device in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **9** is a flow chart showing a method of operating the scanner of FIG. **5**;

FIG. **10** is top schematic view of a scanner according to an embodiment;

FIG. **11** is a flow chart showing a method of operating the scanner of FIG. **10**; and

FIG. **12** is a flow chart showing a diagnostic method according to an embodiment.

The detailed description explains embodiments of the invention, together with advantages and features, by way of example with reference to the drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the present invention provide advantages increasing the reliability and accuracy of three-dimensional coordinates of a data point cloud acquired by a scanner. Embodiments of the invention provide advantages in detecting anomalies in acquired data and automatically adjusting the operation of the scanner to acquire the desired results. Embodiments of the invention provide advantages in detecting anomalies in the acquired data and providing indication to the operator of areas where additional data acquisition is needed. Still further embodiments of the invention provide advantages in detecting anomalies in the acquired data and providing indication to the operator where additional data acquisition may be acquired with a remote probe.

Scanner devices acquire three-dimensional coordinate data of objects. In one embodiment, a scanner **20** shown in FIG. **1** has a housing **22** that includes a first camera **24**, a second camera **26** and a projector **28**. The projector **28** emits light **30** onto a surface **32** of an object **34**. In the exemplary embodiment, the projector **28** uses a visible light source that illuminates a pattern generator. The visible light source may be a laser, a superluminescent diode, an incandescent light, a Xenon lamp, a light emitting diode (LED), or other light emitting device for example. In one embodiment, the pattern generator is a chrome-on-glass slide having a structured light pattern etched thereon. The slide may have a single pattern or multiple patterns that move in and out of position as needed. The slide may be manually or automatically installed in the operating position. In other embodiments, the source pattern may be light reflected off or transmitted by a digital micro-mirror device (DMD) such as a digital light projector (DLP) manufactured by Texas Instruments Corporation, a liquid crystal device (LCD), a liquid crystal on silicon (LCOS) device, or a similar device used in transmission mode rather than reflection mode. The projector **28** may further include a lens system **36** that alters the outgoing light to cover the desired area.

In this embodiment, the projector **28** is configurable to emit a structured light over an area **37**. As used herein, the term "structured light" refers to a two-dimensional pattern of light projected onto an area of an object that conveys information which may be used to determine coordinates of points on the object. In one embodiment, a structured light pattern will contain at least three non-collinear pattern elements disposed within the area. Each of the three non-collinear pattern elements conveys information which may be used to determine the point coordinates. In another embodiment, a projector is provided that is configurable to project both an area pattern as well as a line pattern. In one embodiment, the projector is a digital micromirror device (DMD), which is configured to switch back and forth between the two. In one embodiment, the DMD projector may also sweep a line or to sweep a point in a raster pattern.

In general, there are two types of structured light patterns, a coded light pattern and an uncoded light pattern. As used herein a coded light pattern is one in which the three dimensional coordinates of an illuminated surface of the object are found by acquiring a single image. With a coded light pattern, it is possible to obtain and register point cloud data while the projecting device is moving relative to the object. One type of coded light pattern contains a set of elements (e.g. geometric shapes) arranged in lines where at least three of the elements are non-collinear. Such pattern elements are recognizable because of their arrangement.

In contrast, an uncoded structured light pattern as used herein is a pattern that does not allow measurement through a single pattern. A series of uncoded light patterns may be projected and imaged sequentially. For this case, it is usually necessary to hold the projector fixed relative to the object.

It should be appreciated that the scanner **20** may use either coded or uncoded structured light patterns. The structured light pattern may include the patterns disclosed in the journal article "DLP-Based Structured Light 3D Imaging Technologies and Applications" by Jason Geng published in the Proceedings of SPIE, Vol. 7932, which is incorporated herein by reference. In addition, in some embodiments described herein below, the projector **28** transmits a pattern formed a swept line of light or a swept point of light. Swept lines and points of light provide advantages over areas of light in identifying some types of anomalies such as multi-path interference. Sweeping the line automatically while the scanner is held stationary also has advantages in providing a more uniform sampling of surface points.

The first camera **24** includes a photosensitive sensor **44** which generates a digital image/representation of the area **48** within the sensor's field of view. The sensor may be charged-coupled device (CCD) type sensor or a complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) type sensor for example having an array of pixels. The first camera **24** may further include other components, such as but not limited to lens **46** and other optical devices for example. The lens **46** has an associated first focal length. The sensor **44** and lens **46** cooperate to define a first field of view "X". In the exemplary embodiment, the first field of view "X" is 16 degrees (0.28 inch per inch).

Similarly, the second camera **26** includes a photosensitive sensor **38** which generates a digital image/representation of the area **40** within the sensor's field of view. The sensor may be charged-coupled device (CCD) type sensor or a complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) type sensor for example having an array of pixels. The second camera **26** may further include other components, such as but not limited to lens **42** and other optical devices for example. The lens **42** has an associated second focal length, the second focal length being different than the first focal length. The sensor **38** and lens **42** cooperate to define a second field of view "Y". In the exemplary embodiment, the second field of view "Y" is 50 degrees (0.85 inch per inch). The second field of view Y is larger than the first field of view X. Similarly, the area **40** is larger than the area **48**. It should be appreciated that a larger field of view allows acquired a given region of the object surface **32** to be measured faster; however, if the photosensitive arrays **44** and **38** have the same number of pixels, a smaller field of view will provide higher resolution.

In the exemplary embodiment, the projector **28** and the first camera **24** are arranged in a fixed relationship at an angle such that the sensor **44** may receive light reflected from the surface of the object **34**. Similarly, the projector **28** and the second camera **26** are arranged in a fixed relationship at an angle such that the sensor **38** may receive light reflected from the surface **32** of object **34**. Since the projector **28**, first camera **24** and second camera **26** have fixed geometric relationships, the distance and the coordinates of points on the surface may be determined by their trigonometric relationships. Although the fields-of-view (FOVs) of the cameras **24** and **26** are shown not to overlap in FIG. **1**, the FOVs may partially overlap or totally overlap.

The projector **28** and cameras **24**, **26** are electrically coupled to a controller **50** disposed within the housing **22**. The controller **50** may include one or more microprocessors, digital signal processors, memory and signal conditioning circuits. The scanner **20** may further include actuators (not shown) which may be manually activated by the operator to initiate operation and data capture by the scanner **20**. In one embodiment, the image processing to determine the X, Y, Z coordinate data of the point cloud representing the surface **32** of object **34** is performed by the controller **50**. The coordinate data may be stored locally such as in a volatile or nonvolatile memory **54** for example. The memory may be removable, such as a flash drive or a memory card for example. In other embodiments, the scanner **20** has a communications circuit **52** that allows the scanner **20** to transmit the coordinate data to a remote processing system **56**. The communications medium **58** between the scanner **20** and the remote processing system **56** may be wired (e.g. Ethernet) or wireless (e.g. Bluetooth, IEEE 802.11). In one embodiment, the coordinate data is determined by the remote processing system **56** based on acquired images transmitted by the scanner **20** over the communications medium **58**.

A relative motion is possible between the object surface **32** and the scanner **20**, as indicated by the bidirectional arrow **47**. There are several ways in which such relative motion may be provided. In an embodiment, the scanner is a handheld scanner and the object **34** is fixed. Relative motion is provided by moving the scanner over the object surface. In another embodiment, the scanner is attached to a robotic end effector. Relative motion is provided by the robot as it moves the scanner over the object surface. In another embodiment, either the scanner **20** or the object **34** is attached to a moving mechanical mechanism, for example, a gantry coordinate measurement machine or an articulated arm CMM. Relative motion is provided by the moving mechanical mechanism as it moves the scanner **20** over the object surface. In some embodiments, motion is provided by the action of an operator and in other embodiments, motion is provided by a mechanism that is under computer control.

Referring now to FIG. **2**, the operation of the scanner **20** according to a method **1260** is described. As shown in block **1262**, the projector **28** first emits a structured light pattern onto the area **37** of surface **32** of the object **34**. The light **30** from projector **28** is reflected from the surface **32** as reflected light **62** received by the second camera **26**. The three-dimensional profile of the surface **32** affects the image of the pattern captured by the photosensitive array **38** within the second camera **26**. Using information collected from one or more images of the pattern or patterns, the controller **50** or the remote processing system **56** determines a one to one correspondence between the pixels of the photosensitive array **38** and pattern of light emitted by the projector **28**. Using this one-to-one correspondence, triangulation principals are used to determine the three-dimensional coordinates of points on the surface **32**. This acquisition of three-dimensional coordinate data (point cloud data) is shown in block **1264**. By moving the scanner **20** over the surface **32**, a point cloud may be created of the entire object **34**.

During the scanning process, the controller **50** or remote processing system **56** may detect an undesirable condition or problem in the point cloud data, as shown in block **1266**. Methods for detecting such a problem are discussed hereinbelow with regard to FIG. **12**. The detected problem may be an error in or absence of point cloud data in a particular area for example. This error in or absence of data may be caused by too little or too much light reflected from that area. Too little or too much reflected light may result from a difference in reflectance over the object surface, for example, as a result of high or variable angles of incidence

of the light **30** on the object surface **32** or as a result of low reflectance (black or transparent) materials or shiny surfaces. Certain points on the object may be angled in such as way as to produce a very bright specular reflectance known as a glint.

Another possible reason for an error in or absence of point cloud data is a lack of resolution in regions having fine features, sharp edges, or rapid changes in depth. Such lack of resolution may be the result of a hole, for example.

Another possible reason for an error in or an absence of point cloud data is multipath interference. Ordinarily a ray of light from the projector **28** strikes a point on the surface **32** and is scattered over a range of angles. The scattered light is imaged by the lens **42** of camera **26** onto a small spot on the photosensitive array **38**. Similarly, the scattered light may be imaged by the lens **46** of camera **24** onto a small spot on the photosensitive array **44**. Multipath interference occurs when the light reaching the point on the surface **32** does not come only from the ray of light from the projector **28** but in addition, from secondary light is reflected off another portion of the surface **32**. Such secondary light may compromise the pattern of light received by the photosensitive array **38**, **44**, thereby preventing accurate determination of three-dimensional coordinates of the point. Methods for identifying the presence of multipath interference are described in the present application with regard to FIG. **12**.

If the controller determines that the point cloud is all right in block **1266**, the procedure is finished. Otherwise, a determination is made in block **1268** of whether the scanner is used in a manual or automated mode. If the mode is manual, the operator is directed in block **1270** to move the scanner into the desired position.

There are many ways that the movement desired by the operator may be indicated. In an embodiment, indicator lights on the scanner body indicate the desired direction of movement. In another embodiment, a light is projected onto the surface indicating the direction over which the operator is to move. In addition, a color of the projected light may indicate whether the scanner is too close or too far from the object. In another embodiment, an indication is made on display of the region to which the operator is to project the light. Such a display may be a graphical representation of point cloud data, a Computer Aided Design CAD model, or a combination of the two. The display may be presented on a computer monitor or on a display built into the scanning device.

In any of these embodiments, a method of determining the approximate position of the scanner is desired. In one case, the scanner may be attached to an articulated arm CMM that uses angular encoders in its joints to determine the position and orientation of the scanner attached to its end. In another case, the scanner includes inertial sensors placed within the device. Inertial sensors may include gyroscopes, accelerometers, and magnetometers, for example. Another method of determining the approximate position of the scanner is to illuminate photogrammetric dots placed on or around the object as marker points. In this way, the wide FOV camera in the scanner can determine the approximate position of the scanner in relation to the object.

In another embodiment, a CAD model on a computer screen indicates the regions where additional measurements are desired, and the operator moves the scanner according by matching the features on the object to the features on the scanner. By updating the CAD model on the screen as a scan is taken, the operator may be given rapid feedback whether the desired regions of the part have been measured.

After the operator has moved the scanner into position, a measurement is made in block **1272** with the small FOV camera **24**. By viewing a relatively smaller region in block **1272**, the resolution of the resulting three-dimensional coordinates is improved and better capability is provided to characterize features such as holes and edges.

Because the narrow FOV camera views a relatively smaller region than the wide FOV camera, the projector **28** may illuminate a relatively smaller region. This has advantages in eliminating multipath interference since there is relatively fewer illuminated points on the object that can reflect light back onto the object. Having a smaller illuminated region may also make it easier to control exposure to obtain the optimum amount of light for a given reflectance and angle of incidence of the object under test. In the block **1274**, if all points have been collected, the procedure ends at block **1276**; otherwise it continues.

In an embodiment where the mode from block **1268** is automated, then in block **1278** the automated mechanism moves the scanner into the desired position. In some embodiments, the automated mechanism will have sensors to provide information about the relative position of the scanner and object under test. For an embodiment in which the automated mechanism is a robot, angular transducers within the robot joints provide information about the position and orientation of the robot end effector used to hold the scanner. For an embodiment in which the object is moved by another type of automated mechanism, linear encoders or a variety of other sensors may provide information on the relative position of the object and the scanner.

After the automated mechanism has moved the scanner or object into position, then in block **1280** three-dimensional measurements are made with the small FOV camera. Such measurements are repeated by means of block **1282** until all measurements are completed and the procedure finishes at block **1284**.

In one embodiment, the projector **28** changes the structured light pattern when the scanner switches from acquiring data with the second camera **26** to the first camera **24**. In another embodiment, the same structured light pattern is used with both cameras **24**, **26**. In still another embodiment, the projector **28** emits a pattern formed by a swept line or point when the data is acquired by the first camera **24**. After acquiring data with the first camera **24**, the process continues scanning using the second camera **26**. This process continues until the operator has either scanned the desired area of the part.

It should be appreciated that while the process of FIG. **2** is shown as a linear or sequential process, in other embodiments one or more of the steps shown may be executed in parallel. In the method shown in FIG. **2**, the method involved measuring the entire object first and then carrying out further detailed measurements according to an assessment of the acquired point cloud data. An alternative using the scanner **20** is to begin by measuring detailed or critical regions using the camera **24** having the small FOV.

It should also be appreciated that it is common practice in existing scanning systems to provide a way of changing the camera lens or projector lens as a way of changing the FOV of the camera or of projector in the scanning system. However, such changes are time consuming and typically require an additional compensation step in which an artifact such as a dot plate is placed in front of the camera or projector to determine the aberration correction parameters for the camera or projector system. Hence a scanning system that provides two cameras having different FOVs, such as

the cameras **24**, **26** of FIG. **1**, provides a significant advantage in measurement speed and in enablement of the scanner for a fully automated mode.

Another embodiment is shown in FIG. **3** of a scanner **20** having a housing **22** that includes a first coordinate acquisition system **76** and a second coordinate acquisition system **78**. The first coordinate acquisition system **76** includes a first projector **80** and a first camera **82**. Similar to the embodiment of FIG. **1**, the projector **80** emits light **84** onto a surface **32** of an object **34**. In the exemplary embodiment, the projector **80** uses a visible light source that illuminates a pattern generator. The visible light source may be a laser, a superluminescent diode, an incandescent light, a light emitting diode (LED), or other light emitting device. In one embodiment, the pattern generator is a chrome-on-glass slide having a structured light pattern etched thereon. The slide may have a single pattern or multiple patterns that move in and out of position as needed. The slide may be manually or automatically installed in the operating position. In other embodiments, the source pattern may be light reflected off or transmitted by a digital micro-mirror device (DMD) such as a digital light projector (DLP) manufactured by Texas Instruments Corporation, a liquid crystal device (LCD), a liquid crystal on silicon (LCOS) device, or a similar device used in transmission mode rather than reflection mode. The projector **80** may further include a lens system **86** that alters the outgoing light to have the desired focal characteristics.

The first camera **82** includes a photosensitive array sensor **88** which generates a digital image/representation of the area **90** within the sensor's field of view. The sensor may be charged-coupled device (CCD) type sensor or a complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) type sensor for example having an array of pixels. The first camera **82** may further include other components, such as but not limited to lens **92** and other optical devices for example. The first projector **80** and first camera **82** are arranged at an angle in a fixed relationship such that the first camera **82** may detect light **85** from the first projector **80** reflected off of the surface **32** of object **34**. It should be appreciated that since the first camera **92** and first projector **80** are arranged in a fixed relationship, the trigonometric principals discussed above may be used to determine coordinates of points on the surface **32** within the area **90**. Although for clarity FIG. **3** is depicted as having the first camera **82** near to the first projector **80**, it should be appreciated that the camera could be placed nearer the other side of the housing **22**. By spacing the first camera **82** and first projector **80** farther apart, accuracy of 3D measurement is expected to improve.

The second coordinate acquisition system **78** includes a second projector **94** and a second camera **96**. The projector **94** has a light source that may comprise a laser, a light emitting diode (LED), a superluminescent diode (SLED), a Xenon bulb, or some other suitable type of light source. In an embodiment, a lens **98** is used to focus the light received from the laser light source into a line of light **100** and may comprise one or more cylindrical lenses, or lenses of a variety of other shapes. The lens is also referred to herein as a "lens system" because it may include one or more individual lenses or a collection of lenses. The line of light is substantially straight, i.e., the maximum deviation from a line will be less than about 1% of its length. One type of lens that may be utilized by an embodiment is a rod lens. Rod lenses are typically in the shape of a full cylinder made of glass or plastic polished on the circumference and ground on both ends. Such lenses convert collimated light passing through the diameter of the rod into a line. Another type of lens that may be used is a cylindrical lens. A cylindrical lens is a lens that has the shape of a partial cylinder. For example, one surface of a cylindrical lens may be flat, while the opposing surface is cylindrical in form.

In another embodiment, the projector **94** generates a two-dimensional pattern of light that covers an area of the surface **32**. The resulting coordinate acquisition system **78** is then referred to as a structured light scanner.

The second camera **96** includes a sensor **102** such as a charge-coupled device (CCD) type sensor or a complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) type sensor for example. The second camera **96** may further include other components, such as but not limited to lens **104** and other optical devices for example. The second projector **94** and second camera **96** are arranged at an angle such that the second camera **96** may detect light **106** from the second projector **94** reflected off of the object **34**. It should be appreciated that since the second projector **94** and the second camera **96** are arranged in a fixed relationship, the trigonometric principles discussed above may be used to determine coordinates of points on the surface **32** on the line formed by light **100**. It should also be appreciated that the camera **96** and the projector **94** may be located on opposite sides of the housing **22** to increase 3D measurement accuracy.

In another embodiment, the second coordinate acquisition system is configured to project a variety of patterns, which may include not only a fixed line of light but also a swept line of light, a swept point of light, a coded pattern of light (covering an area), or a sequential pattern of light (covering an area). Each type of projection pattern has different advantages such as speed, accuracy, and immunity to multipath interference. By evaluating the performance requirements for each particular measurements and/or by reviewing the characteristics of the returned data or of the anticipated object shape (from CAD models or from a 3D reconstruction based on collected scan data), it is possible to select the type of projected pattern that optimizes performance.

In another embodiment, the distance from the second coordinate acquisition system **78** and the object surface **32** is different than the distance from the first coordinate acquisition system **76** and the object surface **32**. For example, the camera **96** may be positioned closer to the object **32** than the camera **88**. In this way, the resolution and accuracy of the second coordinate acquisition system **78** can be improved relative to that of the first coordinate acquisition system **76**. In many cases, it is helpful to quickly scan a relatively large and smooth object with a lower resolution system **76** and then scan details including edges and holes with a higher resolution system **78**.

A scanner **20** may be used in a manual mode or in an automated mode. In a manual mode, an operator is prompted to move the scanner nearer or farther from the object surface according to the acquisition system that is being used. Furthermore, the scanner **20** may project a beam or pattern of light indicating to the operator the direction in which the scanner is to be moved. Alternatively, indicator lights on the device may indicate the direction in which the scanner should be moved. In an automated mode, the scanner **20** or object **34** may be automatically moved relative to one another according to the measurement requirements.

Similar to the embodiment of FIG. **1**, the first coordinate acquisition system **76** and the second coordinate acquisition system **78** are electrically coupled to a controller **50** disposed within the housing **22**. The controller **50** may include one or more microprocessors, digital signal processors, memory and signal conditioning circuits. The scanner **20**

may further include actuators (not shown) which may be manually activated by the operator to initiate operation and data capture by the scanner **20**. In one embodiment, the image processing to determine the X, Y, Z coordinate data of the point cloud representing the surface **32** of object **34** is performed by the controller **50**. The coordinate data may be stored locally such as in a volatile or nonvolatile memory **54** for example. The memory may be removable, such as a flash drive or a memory card for example. In other embodiments, the scanner **20** has a communications circuit **52** that allows the scanner **20** to transmit the coordinate data to a remote processing system **56**. The communications medium **58** between the scanner **20** and the remote processing system **56** may be wired (e.g. Ethernet) or wireless (e.g. Bluetooth, IEEE 802.11). In one embodiment, the coordinate data is determined by the remote processing system **56** and the scanner **20** transmits acquired images on the communications medium **58**.

Referring now to FIG. **4**, the method **1400** of operating the scanner **20** of FIG. **3** will be described. In block **1402**, the first projector **80** of the first coordinate acquisition system **76** of scanner **20** emits a structured light pattern onto the area **90** of surface **32** of the object **34**. The light **84** from projector **80** is reflected from the surface **32** and the reflected light **85** is received by the first camera **82**. As discussed above, the variations in the surface profile of the surface **32** create distortions in the imaged pattern of light received by the first photosensitive array **88**. Since the pattern is formed by structured light, a line or light, or a point of light, it is possible in some instances for the controller **50** or the remote processing system **56** to determine a one to one correspondence between points on the surface **32** and the pixels in the photosensitive array **88**. This enables triangulation principles discussed above to be used in block **1404** to obtain point cloud data, which is to say to determine X, Y, Z coordinates of points on the surface **32**. By moving the scanner **20** relative to the surface **32**, a point cloud may be created of the entire object **34**.

In block **1406**, the controller **50** or remote processing system **56** determines whether the point cloud data possesses the desired data quality attributes or has a potential problem. The types of problems that may occur were discussed hereinabove in reference to FIG. **2** and this discussion is not repeated here. If the controller determines that the point cloud has the desired data quality attributes in block **1406**, the procedure is finished. Otherwise, a determination is made in block **1408** of whether the scanner is used in a manual or automated mode. If the mode is manual, the operator is directed in block **1410** to move the scanner to the desired position.

There are several ways of indicating the desired movement by the operator as described hereinabove with reference to FIG. **2**. This discussion is not repeated here.

To direct the operator in obtaining the desired movement, a method of determining the approximate position of the scanner is needed. As explained with reference to FIG. **2**, methods may include attachment of the scanner **20** to an articulated arm CMM, use of inertial sensors within the scanner **20**, illumination of photogrammetric dots, or matching of features to a displayed image.

After the operator has moved the scanner into position, a measurement is made with the second coordinate acquisition system **78** in block **1412**. By using the second coordinate acquisition system, resolution and accuracy may be improved or problems may be eliminated. In block **1414**, if all points have been collected, the procedure ends at block **1416**; otherwise it continues.

If the mode of operation from block **1408** is automated, then in block **1418** the automated mechanism moves the scanner into the desired position. In most cases, an automated mechanism will have sensors to provide information about the relative position of the scanner and object under test. For the case in which the automated mechanism is a robot, angular transducers within the robot joints provide information about the position and orientation of the robot end effector used to hold the scanner. For other types of automated mechanisms, linear encoders or a variety of other sensors may provide information on the relative position of the object and the scanner.

After the automated mechanism has moved the scanner or object into position, then in block **1420** three-dimensional measurements are made with the second coordinate acquisition system **78**. Such measurements are repeated by means of block **1422** until all measurements are completed. The procedure finishes at block **1424**.

It should be appreciated that while the process of FIG. **4** is shown as a linear or sequential process, in other embodiments one or more of the steps shown may be executed in parallel. In the method shown in FIG. **4**, the method involved measuring the entire object first and then carrying out further detailed measurements according to an assessment of the acquired point cloud data. An alternative using scanner **20** is to begin by measuring detailed or critical regions using the second coordinate acquisition system **78**.

It should also be appreciated that it is common practice in existing scanning systems to provide a way of changing the camera lens or projector lens as a way of changing the FOV of the camera or of projector in the scanning system. However, such changes are time consuming and typically require an additional compensation step in which an artifact such as a dot plate is placed in front of the camera or projector to determine the aberration correction parameters for the camera or projector system. Hence a system that provides two different coordinate acquisition systems such as the scanning system **20** of FIG. **3** provides a significant advantage in measurement speed and in enablement of the scanner for a fully automated mode.

An error may occur in making scanner measurements as a result of multipath interference. The origin of multipath interference is now discussed, and a first method for eliminating or reducing multipath interference is described.

The case of multipath interference occurs when the some of the light that strikes the object surface is first scattered off another surface of the object before returning to the camera. For the point on the object that receives this scattered light, the light sent to the photosensitive array then corresponds not only to the light directly projected from the projector but also to the light sent to a different point on the projector and scattered off the object. The result of multipath interference, especially for the case of scanners that project two-dimensional (structured) light, may be to cause the distance calculated from the projector to the object surface at that point to be inaccurate.

An instance of multipath interference is illustrated in reference to FIG. **5**A, in this embodiment a scanner **4570** projects a line of light **4525** onto the surface **4510**A of an object. The line of light **4525** is perpendicular to the plane of the paper. In an embodiment, the rows of a photosensitive array are parallel to the plane of the paper and the columns are perpendicular to the plane of the paper. Each row represents one point on the projected line **4525** in the direction perpendicular to the plane of the paper. The distance from the projector to the object for that point on the line is found by first calculating the centroid for each row.

For the surface point **4526**, the centroid on the photosensitive array **4541** is represented by the point **4546**. The position **4546** of the centroid on the photosensitive array can be used to calculate the distance from the camera perspective center **4544** to the object point **4526**. This calculation is based on trigonometric relationships according to the principles of triangulation. To perform these calculations, the baseline distance D from the camera perspective center **4544** to the projector perspective center **4523** is required. In addition, knowledge of the relative orientation of the projector system **4520** to the camera system **4540** is required.

To understand the error caused by multipath interference, consider the point **4527**. Light reflected or scattered from this point is imaged by the lens **4542** onto the point **4548** on the photosensitive array **4541**. However, in addition to the light received directly from the projector and scattered off the point **4527**, additional light is reflected off the point **4526** onto the point **4527** before being imaged onto the photosensitive array. The light will mostly likely be scattered to an unexpected position and cause two centroids to be formed in a given row. Consequently observation of two centroids on a given row is a good indicator of the presence of multipath interference.

For the case of structured light projected onto an area of the object surface, a secondary reflection from a point such as **4527** is not usually as obvious as for light projected onto a line and hence is more likely to create an error in the measured 3D surface coordinates.

By using a projector having an adjustable pattern of illumination on a display element **4521**, it is possible to vary the pattern of illumination. The display element **4521** might be a digital micromechanical mirror (DMM) such as a digital light projector (DLP). Such devices contain multiple small mirrors that are rapidly adjustable by means of an electrical signal to rapidly adjust a pattern of illumination. Other devices that can produce an electrically adjustable display pattern include an LCD (liquid crystal display) and an LCOS (liquid crystal on silicon) display.

A way of checking for multipath interference in a system that projects structured light over an area is to change the display to project a line of light. The presence of multiple centroids in a row will indicate that multipath interference is present. By sweeping the line of light, an area can be covered without requiring that the probe be moved by an operator.

The line of light can be set to any desired angle by an electrically adjustable display. By changing the direction of the projected line of light, multipath interference can, in many cases, be eliminated.

For surfaces having many fold and steep angles so that reflections are hard to avoid, the electrically adjustable display can be used to sweep a point of light. In some cases, a secondary reflection may be produced from a single point of light, but it is usually relatively easy to determine which of the reflected spots of light is valid.

An electrically adjustable display can also be used to quickly switch between a coded and an uncoded pattern. In most cases, a coded pattern is used to make a 3D measurement based on a single frame of camera information. On the other hand, multiple patterns (sequential or uncoded patterns) may be used to obtain greater accuracy in the measured 3D coordinate values.

In the past, electrically adjustable displays have been used to project each of a series of patterns within a sequential pattern—for example, a series of gray scale line patterns followed by a sequence of sinusoidal patterns, each having a different phase.

The present inventive method provides advantages over earlier methods in selecting those methods that identify or eliminate problems such as multipath interference and that indicate whether a single-shot pattern (for example, coded pattern) or a multiple-shot pattern is preferred to obtain the required accuracy as quickly as possible.

For the case of a line scanner, there is often a way to determine the presence of multipath interference. When multipath interference is not present, the light reflected by a point on the object surface is imaged in a single row onto a region of contiguous pixels. If there are two or more regions of a row receive a significant amount of light, multipath interference is indicated. An example of such a multipath interference condition and the resulting extra region of illumination on the photosensitive array are shown in FIG. **5**A. The surface **4510**A now has a greater curvature near the point of intersection **4526**. The surface normal at the point of intersection is the line **4528**, and the angle of incidence is **4531**. The direction of the reflected line of light **4529** is found from the angle of reflection **4532**, which is equal to the angle of incidence. As stated hereinabove, the line of light **4529** actually represents an overall direction for light that scatters over a range of angles. The center of the scattered light strikes the surface **4510**A at the point **4527**, which is imaged by the lens **4544** at the point **4548** on the photosensitive array. The unexpectedly high amount of light received in the vicinity of point **4548** indicates that multipath interference is probably present. For a line scanner, the main concern with multipath interference is not for the case shown in FIG. **5**A, where the two spots **4546** and **4527** are separated by a considerable distance and can be analyzed separately but rather for the case in which the two spots overlap or smear together. In this case, it may not be possible to determine the centroid corresponding to the desired point, which in FIG. **15**E corresponds to the point **4546**. The problem is made worse for the case of a scanner that projects light over a two-dimensional area as can be understood by again referring to FIG. **5**A. If all of the light imaged onto the photosensitive array **4541** were needed to determine two-dimensional coordinates, then it is clear that the light at the point **4527** would correspond to the desired pattern of light directly projected from the projector as well as the unwanted light reflected off the object surface to the point **4527**. As a result, in this case, the wrong three dimensional coordinates would likely be calculated for the point **4527** for light projected over an area.

For a projected line of light, in many cases, it is possible to eliminate multipath interference by changing the direction of the line. One possibility is to make a line scanner using a projector having inherent two-dimensional capability, thereby enabling the line to be swept or to be automatically rotated to different directions. An example of such a projector is one that makes use of a digital micromirror (DMD), as discussed hereinabove. For example, if multipath interference were suspected in a particular scan obtained with structured light, a measurement system could be automatically configured to switch to a measurement method using a swept line of light.

Another method to reduce, minimize or eliminate multipath interference is to sweep a point of light, rather than a line of light or an area of light, over those regions for which multipath interference has been indicated. By illuminating a single point of light, any light scattered from a secondary reflection can usually be readily identified.

The determination of the desired pattern projected by an electrical adjustable display benefits from a diagnostic analysis, as described with respect to FIG. **12** below.

Besides its use in diagnosing and correcting multipath interference, changing the pattern of projected light also provides advantages in obtaining a required accuracy and resolution in a minimum amount of time. In an embodiment, a measurement is first performed by projecting a coded pattern of light onto an object in a single shot. The three-dimensional coordinates of the surface are determined using the collected data, and the results analyzed to determine whether some regions have holes, edges, or features that require more detailed analysis. Such detailed analysis might be performed for example by using the narrow FOV camera **24** in FIG. **1** or the high resolution scanner system **78** in FIG. **3**.

The coordinates are also analyzed to determine the approximate distance to the target, thereby providing a starting distance for a more accurate measurement method such as a method that sequentially projects sinusoidal phase-shifted patterns of light onto a surface, as discussed hereinabove. Obtaining a starting distance for each point on the surface using the coded light pattern eliminates the need to obtain this information by vary the pitch in multiple sinusoidal phase-shifted scans, thereby saving considerable time.

Referring now to FIG. **5**B, an embodiment is shown for overcoming anomalies or improving accuracy in coordinate data acquired by scanner **20**. The process **211** starts in block **212** by scanning an object, such as object **34**, with a scanner **20**. The scanner **20** may be a scanner such as those described in the embodiments of FIG. **1**, **3**, **5** and FIG. **7** for example having at least one projector and a camera. In this embodiment, the scanner **20** projects a first light pattern onto the object in block **212**. In one embodiment, this first light pattern is a coded structured light pattern. The process **211** acquires and determines the three-dimensional coordinate data in block **214**. The coordinate data is analyzed in query block **216** to determine if there are any anomalies, such as the aforementioned multipath interference, low resolution around an element, or an absence of data due to surface angles or surface reflectance changes. When an anomaly is detected, the process **211** proceeds to block **218** where the light pattern emitted by the projector is changed to a second light pattern. In an embodiment, the second light pattern is a swept line of light.

After projecting the second light pattern, the process **211** proceeds to block **220** where the three-dimensional coordinate data is acquired and determined for the area where the anomaly was detected. The process **211** loops back to query block **216** where it is determined if the anomaly has been resolved. If the query block **216** still detects an anomaly or lack or accuracy or resolution, the process loops back to block **218** and switches to a third light pattern. In an embodiment, the third light pattern is a sequential sinusoidal phase shift pattern. In another embodiment, the third light pattern is a swept point of light. This iterative procedure continues until the anomaly has been resolved. Once coordinate data from the area of the anomaly has been determined, the process **211** proceeds to block **222** where the emitted pattern is switched back to the first structured light pattern and the scanning process is continued. The process **211** continues until the operator has scanned the desired area of the object. In the event that the scanning information obtained using the method of FIG. **11** is not satisfactory, a problem of measuring with a tactile probe, as discussed herein, may be used.

Referring now to FIG. **6**, another embodiment of a scanner **20** is shown mounted to a movable apparatus **120**. The scanner **20** has at least one projector **122** and at least one camera **124** that are arranged in a fixed geometric relationship such that trigonometric principles may be used to determine the three-dimensional coordinates of points on the surface **32**. The scanner **20** may be the same scanner as described in reference to FIG. **1** or FIG. **3** for example. In one embodiment, the scanner is the same as the scanner of FIG. **10** having a tactile probe. However the scanner used in the embodiment of FIG. **6** may be any scanner such as a structured light or line scanner, for example, a scanner disclosed in commonly owned U.S. Pat. No. 7,246,030 entitled "Portable Coordinate Measurement Machine with Integrated Line Laser Scanner" filed on 18 Jan. 2006 which is incorporated by reference herein. In another embodiment, the scanner used in the embodiment of FIG. **6** is a structured light scanner that projects light over an area on an object.

In the exemplary embodiment, the moveable apparatus **120** is a robotic apparatus that provides automated movements by means of arm segments **126**, **128** that are connected by pivot and swivel joints **130** to allow the arm segments **126**, **128** to be moved, resulting in the scanner **20** moving from a first position to a second position (as indicated in dashed line in FIG. **6**). The moveable apparatus **120** may include actuators, such as motors (not shown), for example, that are coupled to the arm segments **126**, **128** to move the arm segments **126**, **128** from the first position to the second position. It should be appreciated that a movable apparatus **120** having articulated arms is for exemplary purposes and the claimed invention should not be so limited. In other embodiments, the scanner **20** may be mounted to a movable apparatus that moves the scanner **20** via rails, wheels, tracks, belts or cables or a combination of the foregoing for example. In other embodiments, the robot has a different number of arm segments.

In one embodiment, the movable apparatus is an articulated arm coordinate measurement machine (AACMM) such as that described in commonly owned U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/491,176 filed on Jan. 20, 2010. In this embodiment, the movement of the scanner **20** from the first position to the second position may involve the operator manually moving the arm segments **126**, **128**.

For an embodiment having an automated apparatus, the moveable apparatus **120** further includes a controller **132** that is configured to energize the actuators to move the arm segments **126**, **128**. In one embodiment, the controller **132** communicates with a controller **134**. As will be discussed in more detail below, this arrangement allows the controller **132** to move the scanner **20** in response to an anomaly in the acquired data. It should be appreciated that the controllers **132**, **134** may be incorporated into a single processing unit or the functionality may be distributed among several processing units.

By carrying out an analysis with reference to FIG. **12**, it is possible to position and orient the scanner **20** to obtain the desired measurement results. In some embodiments, a feature being measured may benefit from a desired direction of the scanner. For example, measurement of the diameter of a hole may be improved by orienting the scanner camera **124** to be approximately perpendicular to the hole. In other embodiments, a scanner may be positioned so as to reduce or minimize the possibility of multipath interference. Such an analysis may be based on a CAD model available as a part of the diagnostic procedure or it may be based on data collected by the scanner in an initial position prior to a secondary movement of the scanner **20** by the apparatus **120**.

Referring now to FIG. **7**, the operation of the scanner **20** and movable apparatus **120** will be described. The process starts in block **136** with scanning the object **34** with the

scanner **20** in the first position. The scanner **20** acquires and determines coordinate data for points on the surface **32** of the object **34** in block **138**. It should be appreciated that the movable apparatus **120** may move the scanner **20** to acquire data on surface points in a desired area. In query block **140**, it is determined whether there is an anomaly in the coordinate data at point **142**, such as multipath interference for example, or whether there is a need to change direction to obtain improved resolution or measurement accuracy. It should be appreciated that the point **142** of FIG. **6** may represent a single point, a line of points or an area on the surface **32**. If an anomaly or need for improved accuracy is detected, the process continues to block **144** where the movable apparatus **120** moves the position of the scanner **20**, such as from the first position to the second position, and rescans the area of interest in block **146** to acquire three-dimensional coordinate data. The process loops back to query block **140** where it is determined whether there is still an anomaly in the coordinate data or if an improvement measurement accuracy is desired. If these cases, the scanner **20** is moved again and the process continues until the measurement results achieve a desired level. Once the coordinate data is obtained, the process proceeds from query block **140** to block **148** where the scanning process continues until the desired area has been scanned.

In embodiments where the scanner **20** includes a tactile probe (FIG. **10**), the movement of the scanner from the first position to the second position may be arranged to contact the areas of interest with the tactile probe. Since the position of the scanner, and thus the tactile probe, may be determined from the position and orientation of the arm segments **126**, **128** the three-dimensional coordinates of the point on the surface **32** may be determined.

In some embodiments, measurement results obtained by the scanner **20** of FIGS. **8**A, **8**B may be corrupted by multipath interference. In other cases, measurement results may not provide the desired resolution or accuracy to properly measure some characteristics of the surface **32**, especially edges, holes, or intricate features. In these cases, it may be desirable to have an operator use a remote probe **152** to interrogate points or areas on the surface **32**. In one embodiment shown in FIGS. **8**A, **8**B, the scanner **20** includes a projector **156** and cameras **154**, **155** arranged on an angle relative to the projector **156** such that light emitted by the projector **156** is reflected off of the surface **32** and received by one or both of the cameras **154**, **155**. The projector **156** and cameras **154**,**156** are arranged in a fixed geometric relationship so that trigonometric principles may be used to determine the three-dimensional coordinates of points on the surface **32**.

In one embodiment, the projector **156** is configured to emit a visible light **157** onto an area of interest **159** on the surface **32** of object **34** as shown in FIG. **8**A. The three-dimensional coordinates of the illuminated area of interest **159** may be confirmed using the image of the illuminated region **159** on one or both of the cameras **154**, **155**.

The scanner **20** is configured to cooperate with the remote probe **152** so that an operator may bring a probe tip **166** into contact with the object surface **132** at the illuminated region of interest **159**. In an embodiment, the remote probe **152** includes at least three non-collinear points of light **168**. The points of light **168** may be spots of light produced, for example, by light emitting diodes (LED) or reflective dots of light illuminated by infrared or visible light source from the projector **156** or from another light source not depicted in FIG. **8**B. The infrared or visible light source in this case may be attached to the scanner **20** or may be placed external to the scanner **20**. By determining the three-dimensional coordinates of the spots of light **168** with the scanner and by using information on the geometry of the probe **152**, the position of the probe tip **166** may be determined, thereby enabling the coordinates of the object surface **32** to be determined. A tactile probe used in this way eliminates potential problems from multipath interference and also enables relatively accurate measurement of holes, edges, and detailed features. In an embodiment, the probe **166** is a tactile probe, which may be activated by pressing of an actuator button (not shown) on the probe, or the probe **166** may be a touch-trigger probe activated by contact with the surface **32**. In response to a signal produced by the actuator button or the touch trigger probe, a communications circuit (not shown) transmits a signal to the scanner **20**. In an embodiment, the points of light **168** are replaced with geometrical patterns of light, which may include lines or curves.

Referring now to FIG. **9**, a process is shown for acquiring coordinate data for points on the surface **32** of object **34** using a stationary scanner **20** of FIGS. **8**A, **8**B with a remote probe **152**. The process starts in block **170** with the surface **32** of the object **34** being scanned. The process acquires and determines the three-dimensional coordinate data of the surface **32** in block **172**. The process then determines in query block **174** whether there is an anomaly in the coordinate data of area **159** or whether there is a problem in accuracy or resolution of the area **159**. An anomaly could be invalid data that is discarded due to multipath interference for example. An anomaly could also be missing data due to surface reflectance or a lack of resolution around a feature such as an opening or hole for example. Details on a diagnostic procedure for detecting (identifying) multipath interference and related problems in given in reference to FIG. **12**.

Once the area **159** has been identified, the scanner **20** indicates in block **176** to the operator the coordinate data of area **159** may be acquired via the remote probe **152**. This area **159** may be indicated by emitting a visible light **157** to illuminate the area **159**. In one embodiment, the light **157** is emitted by the projector **156**. The color of light **157** may be changed to inform the operator of the type of anomaly or problem. For example, where multipath interference occurs, the light **157** may be colored red, while a low resolution may be colored green. The area may further be indicated on a display having a graphical representation (e.g. a CAD model) of the object.

The process then proceeds to block **178** to acquire an image of the remote probe **152** when the sensor **166** touches the surface **32**. The points of light **168**, which may be LEDs or reflective targets, for example, are received by one of the cameras **154**, **155**. Using best-fit techniques well known to mathematicians, the scanner **20** determines in block **180** the three-dimensional coordinates of the probe center from which three-dimensional coordinates of the object surface **32** are determined in block **180**. Once the points in the area **159** where the anomaly was detected have been acquired, the process may proceed to continue the scan of the object **34** in block **182** until the desired areas have been scanned.

Referring now to FIG. **10**, another embodiment of the scanner **20** is shown that may be handheld by the operator during operation. In this embodiment, the housing **22** may include a handle **186** that allows the operator to hold the scanner **20** during operation. The housing **22** includes a projector **188** and a camera **190** arranged on an angle relative to each other such that the light **192** emitted by the projector is reflected off of the surface **32** and received by the camera

190. The scanner 20 of FIG. 10 operates in a manner substantially similar to the embodiments of FIG. 1 and FIG. 3 and acquires three-dimensional coordinate data of points on the surface 32 using trigonometric principles.

The scanner 20 further includes an integral probe member 184. The probe member 184 includes a sensor 194 on one end. The sensor 194 is a tactile probe that may respond to pressing of an actuator button (not shown) by an operator or it may be a touch trigger probe that responds to contact with the surface 32, for example. As will be discussed in more detail below, the probe member 184 allows the operator to acquire coordinates of points on the surface 32 by contacting the sensor 194 to the surface 32.

The projector 188, camera 190 and actuator circuit for the sensor 194 are electrically coupled to a controller 50 disposed within the housing 22. The controller 50 may include one or more microprocessors, digital signal processors, memory and signal conditioning circuits. The scanner 20 may further include actuators (not shown), such as on the handle 186 for example, which may be manually activated by the operator to initiate operation and data capture by the scanner 20. In one embodiment, the image processing to determine the X, Y, Z coordinate data of the point cloud representing the surface 32 of object 34 is performed by the controller 50. The coordinate data may be stored locally such as in a volatile or nonvolatile memory 54 for example. The memory may be removable, such as a flash drive or a memory card for example. In other embodiments, the scanner 20 has a communications circuit 52 that allows the scanner 20 to transmit the coordinate data to a remote processing system 56. The communications medium 58 between the scanner 20 and the remote processing system 56 may be wired (e.g. Ethernet) or wireless (e.g. Bluetooth, IEEE 802.11). In one embodiment, the coordinate data is determined by the remote processing system 56 and the scanner 20 transmits acquired images on the communications medium 58.

Referring now to FIG. 11, the operation of the scanner 20 of FIG. 10 will be described. The process begins in block 196 with the operator scanning the surface 32 of the object 34 by manually moving the scanner 20. The three-dimensional coordinates are determined and acquired in block 198. In query block 200, it is determined if an anomaly is present in the coordinate data or if improved accuracy is needed. As discussed above, anomalies may occur for a number of reasons such as multipath interference, surface reflectance changes or a low resolution of a feature. If an anomaly is present, the process proceeds to block 202 where the area 204 is indicated to the operator. The area 204 may be indicated by projecting a visible light 192 with the projector 188 onto the surface 32. In one embodiment, the light 192 is colored to notify the operator of the type of anomaly detected.

The operator then proceeds to move the scanner from a first position to a second position (indicated by the dashed lines) in block 206. In the second position, the sensor 194 contacts the surface 32. The position and orientation (to six degrees of freedom) of the scanner 20 in the second position may be determined using well known best-fit methods based on images acquired by the camera 190. Since the dimensions and arrangement of the sensor 194 are known in relation to the mechanical structure of the scanner 20, the three-dimensional coordinate data of the points in area 204 may be determined in block 208. The process then proceeds to block 210 where scanning of the object continues. The scanning process continues until the desired area has been scanned.

A general approach may be used to evaluate not only multipath interference but also quality in general, including resolution and effect of material type, surface quality, and geometry. Referring also to FIG. 12, in an embodiment, a method 4600 may be carried out automatically under computer control. A step 4602 is to determine whether information on three-dimensional coordinates of an object under test are available. A first type of three-dimensional information is CAD data. CAD data usually indicates nominal dimensions of an object under test. A second type of three-dimensional information is measured three-dimensional data—for example, data previously measured with a scanner or other device. In some cases, the step 4602 may include a further step of aligning the frame of reference of the coordinate measurement device, for example, laser tracker or six-DOF scanner accessory, with the frame of reference of the object. In an embodiment, this is done by measuring at least three points on the surface of the object with the laser tracker.

If the answer to the question posed in step 4602 is that the three-dimensional information is available, then, in a step 4604, the computer or processor is used to calculate the susceptibility of the object measurement to multipath interference. In an embodiment, this is done by projecting each ray of light emitted by the scanner projector, and calculating the angle or reflection for each case. The computer or software identifies each region of the object surface that is susceptible to error as a result of multipath interference. The step 4604 may also carry out an analysis of the susceptibility to multipath error for a variety of positions of the six-DOF probe relative to the object under test. In some cases, multipath interference may be avoided or minimized by selecting a suitable position and orientation of the six-DOF probe relative to the object under test, as described hereinabove. If the answer to the question posed in step 4602 is that three-dimensional information is not available, then a step 4606 is to measure the three-dimensional coordinates of the object surface using any desired or preferred measurement method. Following the calculation of multipath interference, a step 4608 may be carried out to evaluate other aspects of expected scan quality. One such quality factor is whether the resolution of the scan is sufficient for the features of the object under test. For example, if the resolution of a device is 3 mm, and there are sub-millimeter features for which valid scan data is desired, then these problem regions of the object should be noted for later corrective action. Another quality factor related partly to resolution is the ability to measure edges of the object and edges of holes. Knowledge of scanner performance will enable a determination of whether the scanner resolution is good enough for given edges. Another quality factor is the amount of light expected to be returned from a given feature. Little if any light may be expected to be returned to the scanner from inside a small hole, for example, or from a glancing angle. Also, little light may be expected from certain kinds and colors of materials. Certain types of materials may have a large depth of penetration for the light from the scanner, and in this case good measurement results would not be expected. In some cases, an automatic program may ask for user supplementary information. For example, if a computer program is carrying out steps 4604 and 4608 based on CAD data, it may not know the type of material being used or the surface characteristics of the object under test. In these cases, the step 4608 may include a further step of obtaining material characteristics for the object under test.

Following the analysis of steps 4604 and 4608, the step 4610 is to decide whether further diagnostic procedures

should be carried out. A first example of a possible diagnostic procedure is the step **4612** of projecting a stripe at a preferred angle to note whether multipath interference is observed. The general indications of multipath interference for a projected line stripe were discussed hereinabove with reference to FIG. **5**. Another example of a diagnostic step is step **4614**, which is to project a collection of lines aligned in the direction of epipolar lines on the source pattern of light, for example, the source pattern of light **30** from projector **36** in FIG. **1**. For the case in which lines of light in the source pattern of light are aligned to the epipolar lines, then these lines will also appear as straight lines in the image plane on the photosensitive array. The use of epipolar lines is discussed in more detail in commonly owned U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/443,946 filed Apr. 11, 2012 the contents of which are incorporated by reference herein. If these patterns on the photosensitive array are not straight lines or if the lines are blurred or noisy, then a problem is indicated, possibly as a result of multipath interference.

The step **4616** is to select a combination of preferred actions based on the analyses and diagnostic procedure performed. If speed in a measurement is particularly important, a step **4618** of measuring using a 2D (structured) pattern of coded light may be preferred. If greater accuracy is more important, then a step **4620** of measuring using a 2D (structured) pattern of coded light using sequential patterns, for example, a sequence of sinusoidal patterns of varying phase and pitch, may be preferred. If the method **4618** or **4620** is selected, then it may be desirable to also select a step **4628**, which is to reposition the scanner, in other words to adjust the position and orientation of the scanner to the position that minimizes multipath interference and specular reflections (glints) as provided by the analysis of step **4604**. Such indications may be provided to a user by illuminating problem regions with light from the scanner projector or by displaying such regions on a monitor display. Alternatively, the next steps in the measurement procedure may be automatically selected by a computer or processor. If the preferred scanner position does not eliminate multipath interference and glints, several options are available. In some cases, the measurement can be repeated with the scanner repositioned and the valid measurement results combined. In other cases, alternative measurement steps may be added to the procedure or performed instead of using structured light. As discussed previously, a step **4622** of scanning a stripe of light provides a convenient way of obtaining information over an area with reduced chance of having a problem from multipath interference. A step **4624** of sweeping a small spot of light over a region of interest further reduces the chance of problems from multipath interference. A step of measuring a region of an object surface with a tactile probe eliminates the possibility of multipath interference. A tactile probe provides a known resolution based on the size of the probe tip, and it eliminates issues with low reflectance of light or large optical penetration depth, which might be found in some objects under test.

In most cases, the quality of the data collected in a combination of the steps **4618-4628** may be evaluated in a step **4630** based on the data obtained from the measurements, combined with the results of the analyses carried out previously. If the quality is found to be acceptable in a step **4632**, the measurement is completed at a step **4634**. Otherwise, the analysis resumes at the step **4604**. In some cases, the 3D information may not have been as accurate as desired. In this case, repeating some of the earlier steps may be helpful.

While the invention has been described in detail in connection with only a limited number of embodiments, it should be readily understood that the invention is not limited to such disclosed embodiments. Rather, the invention can be modified to incorporate any number of variations, alterations, substitutions or equivalent arrangements not heretofore described, but which are commensurate with the spirit and scope of the invention. Additionally, while various embodiments of the invention have been described, it is to be understood that aspects of the invention may include only some of the described embodiments. Accordingly, the invention is not to be seen as limited by the foregoing description, but is only limited by the scope of the appended claims.

The invention claimed is:

1. A method of object measurement to determine three-dimensional (3D) coordinates of points on a surface of an object, the method comprising:

providing a remote probe having a probe tip and at least three non-collinear target spots, the probe tip having a spherical shape, the spherical shape having a sphere center, the target spots having a target set of 3D coordinates of the target spots;

providing a 3D coordinate measurement device that includes a projector and a camera, the projector and the camera being fixed in relation to one another, there being a baseline distance between the projector and the camera, the projector including a light source configured to emit a projected light having any of a plurality of patterns, the camera including a lens and a photosensitive array, the camera having a camera field of view, the lens configured to image a reflected portion of the projected light that is within the camera field of view onto the photosensitive array and to produce an electrical signal in response;

providing a processor electrically coupled to the projector and the camera;

selecting by the processor a first pattern from among the plurality of patterns;

emitting from the projector onto the surface, in a first instance, a first projected light having the first pattern;

reflecting into the camera a portion of the first projected light as a first reflected light;

forming with the lens a first image of the first reflected light on the photosensitive array and producing a first electrical signal in response;

determining with the processor a first set of 3D coordinates of first points on the surface, the first set based at least in part on the first pattern, the first electrical signal and the baseline distance;

determining with the processor a first susceptibility of an object measurement to multipath interference, the first susceptibility based at least in part on a simulation in which the processor projects first rays from the projector to the first points and calculates an angle of reflection from each of the first points for each of the corresponding first rays;

selecting with the processor a second pattern from among the plurality of patterns and a first location on the surface, the second pattern and the first location based at least in part on the first susceptibility;

emitting, in a second instance, from the projector onto the surface at the first location a second projected light having the second pattern;

moving by an operator, in response to the second projected light, the remote probe and contacting the probe

tip to the surface proximate the first location, the probe tip having a first sphere center when the probe tip is contacting the surface;

illuminating the target spots;

forming with the lens a second image of the illuminated target spots on the photosensitive array and producing a second electrical signal in response;

determining second 3D coordinates of the first sphere center, the second 3D coordinates based at least in part on the second image, the target set, and the baseline distance; and

storing the second 3D coordinates.

2. The method of claim **1** wherein:

in the step of providing the remote probe, the target spots are retroreflective spots; and

in the step of illuminating the target spots, the target spots are illuminated by a third projected light.

3. The method of claim **1** wherein:

in the step of providing the remote probe, the target spots are light sources; and

in the step of illuminating the target spots, the target spots are illuminated by providing them with electrical power.

4. The method of claim **3** wherein, in the step of providing the remote probe, the remote probe further includes a battery, the battery configured to provide electrical power to the target spots.

5. The method of claim **3** wherein, in the step of providing the remote probe, the light sources are light emitting diodes (LEDs).

6. The method of claim **1** wherein the step of determining with the processor the first susceptibility of the object measurement to multipath interference further includes determining that at least one of the first rays intersects a first portion of the surface, the first portion of the surface being that portion of the surface that is within the camera field of view.

7. The method of claim **1** further including steps of:

combining the first set of 3D coordinates and the second 3D coordinates into a third set of 3D coordinates;

eliminating a portion of the third set of 3D coordinates to obtain a fourth set of 3D coordinates based at least in part on the first susceptibility; and

storing the fourth set of 3D coordinates.

8. A method of object measurement to determine three-dimensional (3D) coordinates of points on a surface of an object, the method comprising:

providing a remote probe having a probe tip and at least three non-collinear target spots, the probe tip having a spherical shape, the spherical shape having a sphere center, the target spots having a target set of 3D coordinates of the target spots;

providing a 3D coordinate measurement device that includes a projector and a camera, the projector and the camera being fixed in relation to one another, there being a baseline distance between the projector and the camera, the projector including a light source configured to emit a projected light having any of a plurality of patterns, the camera including a lens and a photosensitive array, the camera having a camera field of view, the lens configured to image a reflected portion of the projected light that is within the camera field of view onto the photosensitive array and to produce an electrical signal in response;

providing a processor electrically coupled to the projector and the camera;

providing a Computer Aided Design CAD model of the object, the Computer Aided Design CAD model configured to provide computer-readable information for determining a 3D representation of the surface of the object;

providing computer readable media having computer readable instructions which when executed by the processor calculates 3D coordinates of points on the surface based at least in part on the CAD model;

determining with the processor a first set of 3D coordinates of first points on the surface, the first set based at least in part on the computer-readable information in the CAD model;

determining with the processor a first susceptibility of an object measurement to multipath interference, the first susceptibility based at least in part on a simulation in which the processor projects first rays from the projector to the first points and calculates an angle of reflection from each of the first points for each of the corresponding first rays;

selecting with the processor a first pattern from among the plurality of patterns and a first location on the surface, the first pattern and the first location based at least in part on the first susceptibility;

emitting from the projector onto the surface at the first location a first projected light having the first pattern;

moving by an operator, in response to the first projected light, the remote probe and contacting the probe tip to the surface proximate the first location, the probe tip having a first sphere center when the probe tip is contacting the surface;

illuminating the target spots;

forming with the lens a first image of the illuminated target spots on the photosensitive array and producing a first electrical signal in response;

determining first 3D coordinates of the first sphere center, the first 3D coordinates based at least in part on the first image and the target set;

selecting by the processor a second pattern from among the plurality of patterns;

emitting from the projector onto the surface a second projected light having the second pattern;

reflecting into the camera a portion of the second projected light as a second reflected light;

forming with the lens a second image of the second reflected light on the photosensitive array and producing a second electrical signal in response;

determining with the processor a second set of 3D coordinates of second points on the surface, the second set based at least in part on the second pattern, the second electrical signal and the baseline distance;

combining the second set of 3D coordinates and the first 3D coordinates into a third set of 3D coordinates;

eliminating a portion of the third set of 3D coordinates to obtain a fourth set of 3D coordinates based at least in part on the first susceptibility; and

storing the fourth set of 3D coordinates.

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